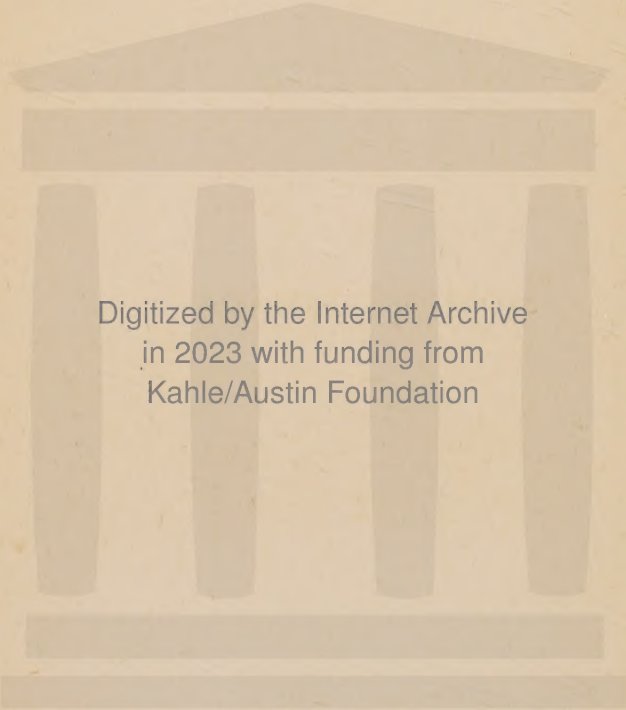




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HOMER'S ITHACA



Cliff of Corax
and
Fountain of Arethusa

HOMER'S ITHACA

A VINDICATION OF TRADITION

BY

SIR RENNELL RODD

Author of "The Princes of Achaia,"
"Customs and Lore of Modern Greece,"
etc.

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To

LILIAS RODD AND AUDREY PARR

MY COMRADES IN THE ADVENTURE OF ITHACA
AND TO THE MANY FRIENDS WE MADE
IN THAT INCOMPARABLE ISLE

NOTE

In the maps reproduced in this little volume, in preparing which I was assisted by my son, Sub-Lieutenant G. R. Rodd, R.N., the names given are, unless it is expressly stated otherwise, those in general use to-day. I have ventured to include two little sketches made on the spot to illustrate the Cyclopean walls of Aetos, and another which claims no merit but fidelity of the striking cliff of Korax.

R. R.

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LEUCAS AND ITHACA IN RELATION TO MAINLAND AND COASTAL ISLANDS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE WAY TO ITHACA. THE HARBOUR OF VATHÝ

It is now nearly forty years since I first traversed the Ithaca channel in H.M.S. *Surprise*. Since then I have explored the greater part of continental Greece and have visited a number of Aegean isles. But the home of Odysseus still remained an island of dreams. Notwithstanding its position on the highway from the Adriatic to the gulf of Corinth, Ithaca is not very accessible. Small coasting steamers maintain communication with Patras, Santi Quaranta and Argostoli, and the advance of time is marked

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by the descent twice a week in the harbour of Vathý of a sea-plane carrying mails between Brindisi and Athens. Yet it remains only a dark outline against a starlit sky which mailboats skirt at night to the majority of hurried travellers from the north in this age of acceleration. And it is likely long so to continue, though the interest of its associations is unique, though its inhabitants are the kindest and friendliest of a country where hospitality to strangers is still traditional, though the outlook from its rugged mountains on the one side to Cephallenia, and on the other to Leucas and the little islands that fringe the Acarnanian coast, can hardly be surpassed even in Greece.

Apart from the strong attraction which the land of Odysseus must always exercise on the imagination, I had another reason for desiring to investigate its topography. Many years ago, when I was a secretary at

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the British Legation in Athens, a theory, which I suspected as heretical, was advanced by no less an authority than Dr. Dörpfeld, the director of the German Archæological School. He was good enough then to explain to me his general conclusions, and has since more amply developed them. His contention, which has been accepted by many scholars of high standing, was that the island now called Ithaca, or Itháki, and long known, by one of those metatheses common in the Romaic, as Thiáki, was not the Ithaca of Homer, which must be identified with Leucas or Leucadia, more familiar to us under its Venetian name of Santa Maura. The present Ithaca was the Homeric Same.¹ Cephalonia or Cephalenia, as it seems more appropriate to call it, using the Greek name, was Doulichion and Zante was Zakynthos. The theory was

¹ In the *Odyssey* the forms Same and Samos seem to be used indifferently.

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plausible because it solved the riddle of Doulichion, while it provided a reasonable explanation of a recurrent line in the *Odyssey* which might otherwise be regarded as a superfluous platitude. I had nevertheless remained sceptical, being strongly attached to tradition as one of the most valuable of historic guides. The *Odyssey*, which I have read more often than any other book, seemed to me to offer abundant evidence of intimacy with the scene of action. Therefore being confident that writers and even poets do not generally venture upon detailed pictures of places they have never seen, and that they could least of all have done so in an age when travellers were rare and records of travel unknown, I eagerly awaited an opportunity of landing in Ithaca in order to satisfy myself whether this apparent evidence of local knowledge could be verified in the island which ancients and moderns

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alike had accepted as the scene of the greatest story in the world.

And now that ambition has been realized. The ketch *Ino*, so renamed after the sea-nymph who gave Odysseus her veil to serve as a life-buoy when Poseidon for the last time roused the elements against him and shattered his dismasted raft, carried me safely to Ithaca, where I spent nearly two wonderful late summer weeks in the little landlocked port of Vathy exploring every part of the island. And all that I had believed proved true. Itháki, so at least it seems to me, fulfils all the requirements of the Homeric text, and I can hardly doubt that the author of the *Odyssey* had lived there for a time and had made himself familiar with the scene of action. The presentation by a poet of a story based on old tradition may have entailed some slight modification or adaptation of physical features to suit the exigencies of his narra-

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tive. We may have to make some allowance for lack of geographical precision in one who was a poet and not a hydrographer. But in the main the accepted version presents fewer difficulties and demands less ingenuity of explanation than the revised version. The much criticized Homeric geography is even surprisingly correct. This is the more remarkable since the poem itself offers evidence how limited was the contemporary knowledge of other lands and how circumscribed the range of geographical information. Odysseus, after his return, when he has assumed the character of a Cretan, is made to say that he had heard of Ithaca even in Crete, far away over the sea, and Euboea, to which the Phaeacians had once carried Rhadamanthys, is referred to by Alcinous as the furthest of countries.

Having desired to reach Ithaca for an even greater number of years than

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Odysseus himself, I also was destined not to land there without a struggle, and in the last stage of our journey Poseidon was manifestly antagonistic. Sailing from Naples on the 19th of September, 1926, we made a good run to Messina, duly observing, as we had often done before on entering the strait from the north, the directions given to Odysseus by Circe, which are repeated in modern sailing instructions, to keep close in to Scylla on the Italian shore and give Charybdis a wide berth. Leaving Messina in the afternoon of the 21st and sailing for the most part on our course, we entered Argostoli Bay in Cephallenia on the evening of the 22nd, after sunset. The Mediterranean twilight is very brief, and Argostoli is not an easy port into which to find the way in the dark. A detailed chart of the harbour was moreover missing from our file. However, we sounded our way in, and picked up a tolerable berth from which

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in the morning we motored to one nearer the town. There was little movement on the dimly lighted shore, where from time to time the lamps of a motor-car flashed through the night, suggesting that the roads engineered during the British occupation were being adequately maintained. At this season Cephallenia looked parched and weary of the sun. In our impatience to reach our destination we renounced an original intention of traversing the island, to explore the Cyclopean walls of Same, and we devoted a single day to marketing, to visiting the splendid Venetian castle-fortress of St. George, and a stream I had long been curious to inspect, which runs from the sea into the land instead of running like other rivers from the land into the sea, a phenomenon perhaps unique at Argostoli. A mile or so from the town the salt water enters a winding channel in the limestone, turning a mill-wheel on

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its short course, and then disappears into the earth through some underground passage. The stream of crystal-clear water appears to have a constant flow inland from the tideless sea, and on its constancy the inhabitants of Argostoli are dependent for a supply of ice which the mill furnishes.

The following morning we made an early start. Once outside the gulf and clear of the land, we encountered a fair southerly breeze and therefore decided to run before the wind and make our way to Ithaca by the northern passage between Cephallenia and the southern headland of Leucas, associated in legend with the death of Sappho. Venetian mariners, no doubt mistaking the Greek Λ of *Λευκάτας* for a Δ , renamed it Cape Ducato. There was every appearance of fine weather, so we hoisted the big square-sail and made good progress along the rugged steep-to coast. Soon after midday we were level with the

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northernmost point of Cephallenia, Cape Vlioti, keeping a watchful eye, however, on a dark bank of cloud which had been gathering over Leucas and was spreading ominously westward. The southerly breeze was dying down and a rapid advance of the cloud-bank with broken water ahead gave us a brief warning of a sudden change of wind. There was only just time to lower the square-sail and the top-sail before a squall struck us from the north. Flashes of lightning followed, and great swathes of mist swept down from the sky, completely veiling Cephallenia and the point of Ithaca beyond. Under the circumstances we were much too near the shore, which we could no longer distinguish, and the only safe course was to make for the open water, where a big sea rose quickly. The angry god had raised his trident to cut off the pilgrims to the island of his ancient victim; the obedient north wind had charged down

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to meet the south wind and prevailed. It was just such a storm as Odysseus had encountered when Poseidon

*πάσας ὁρόθηνεν ἀέλλας
παντοίων ἀνέμων, σὺν δὲ νεφέλεσσι κάλυψε
γαῖαν ὁμὸν καὶ πόντον.*

Od. V. 292.

When the squall had blown itself out and a steadier wind from the north succeeded, we found ourselves some miles N.W. of Cape Ducato. To the south, almost down to water level, a wall of mist still lay over the islands and heavy rain began to fall. As we stood in once more for the passage between Leucas and Cephallenia, we could just see the northern cape of Ithaca. The wind was dying down, so we had recourse to the auxiliary motors. But one of them remained obstinately out of action, the water-intake, as it was afterwards ascertained, being choked with fine seaweed. And so, praying that a second

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squall might not burst upon us, we passed between the capes and rounded the point of Ithaca, keeping much too near the shore for peace of mind because of other islands invisible in the mist which lay to the east of us. After a tropical downpour and more thunder and lightning, we caught a consoling glimpse of Aghios Nicola lighthouse. By the time we drew abreast of Port Phrikes the rain stopped, and the lifting vapours revealed an attractive prospect of cypress and olive trees in the hollows between mountains which for the most part sloped sheerly to the sea.

We had counted on entering the Gulf of Molo, which divides Ithaca into two nearly equal sections joined by an isthmus, early in the afternoon, and on making Port Vathy by daylight, as the entrance is only one cable and a quarter wide between steep rocky slopes. But our long reach out into the open sea had cost us a couple of hours,

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and before we could round Cape Aghios Elias at the entrance to the gulf, quite four miles from our destination, rosy flushes on the clouds, which still veiled the heights, proclaimed the end of day. The loftier Cephallenian mountains beyond the isthmus screened the sunset glow and darkness fell quickly. In the evening grey the southern side of the gulf looked like one continuous ridge, but a light became visible indicating approximately the channel to Vathy, which was in due course revealed to us, as we drew abreast of it, by vivid flashes of lightning. We could hear the goat bells ringing in the darkness as we passed through the water-gateway. And then the intermittent flashes showed a perfectly landlocked haven forming an irregular ellipse in a basin of the hills. A well-lighted little town extended round nearly a third of its circumference, lying at the base of a lofty mountain. As its name implies, the harbour of

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Vathy is very deep. Soundings on the eastern side at first gave us no bottom, then twelve fathoms, then ten, and eventually seven, at which mark we let go the anchor. It had been an eventful and at moments a thrilling day for the navigator. But Captain Rice had proved his mettle in unknown waters and without a detailed chart, and now we lay safe with good holding in mud, which is an important matter in an anchorage reputed to be subject to sudden squalls from the mountains. The sheet lightning which continued for a while afforded fleeting glimpses of a landscape which aroused pleasant anticipations of the morrow. No shore boat came out to inspect us, but the town lights gave a pleasant sense of companionship. After a welcome meal we found the sky had cleared and the stars were shining with that naked lustre which they display in the pellucid air of Greece, darting shafts of light across the

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still water. Towards midnight there was an unexpected and prolonged crowing of cocks challenging and responding all round the bay. Then silence fell again and all was peace after storm that warm September night in the island of dreams.

Morning revealed the beauty of this wonderful natural harbour. To the north, beyond the Gulf of Molo, the mountain mass of Anoi, which dominates that section of the island, rose like a gigantic pediment. To the west was the more abrupt Mero-vugli or S. Stefano, with a series of ridges declining to the south. Eastward were lower rounded hills. Behind the town a fertile valley rose gradually with terraced steps planted with olives towards the southern heights. The quays were full of life and movement. A circular letter to the harbour authorities from my old friend, M. Caclamano, the Greek Minister in London, not only made everything easy but

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procured us the immediate acquaintance of the principal citizens, who were zealously prompt to offer friendly services. After an exploration of the material resources, and a visit to the leading grocer or Pantopólis, rightly so called because he sells almost everything, we found ourselves sitting outside the café of Odysseus taking our mastic with the Mayor of Ithaca, the chief port and customs officer and M. Kolyvos, a gentleman who had spent seven years in South Africa and spoke perfect English. Through their good offices we became acquainted with one Gerasimou Algarinos, whose name suggested descent from some Algerian corsair, the owner of a strong horse and a quite adequate carriage. When his services as a driver were not in demand—and the introduction of two or three Ford cars had established formidable competition—he pursued game in the mountains and was familiar with every inch of the

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island. He at once attached himself to us as a guide, and also procured us partridges and hares, a most welcome supplement to a rather scanty market in which meat other than goat flesh could only be obtained twice a week. Chickens and even turkeys were available when ordered beforehand. Eggs were rather scarce and fish rare in the summer season.

Although the island is not very productive, exporting little beyond currants and a small quantity of oil, the population of Ithaca gives the impression of being prosperous and well contented. While most of the families own small estates, their livelihood is largely derived from interests outside their own land, mostly connected with the shipping industry. In the spacious harbour few vessels are seen except the visiting steamers which load and unload in a couple of hours and proceed on their way. But one or two members of every house were

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abroad, the majority, it would seem, in England or the colonies, occupied as ship-owners or ships' chandlers or serving as merchant skippers. They appear to achieve considerable success in business abroad, but like Odysseus, they never forget their native island. A little four- or five-roomed house, to which they are impatient to return in the summer months, may be the real home of a wealthy family owning a big establishment in Paris or London. There were even one or two English wives in Ithaca of husbands whose work lies in Bristol or Cardiff, residing in comfortable houses above the town in order to attend to the education of their children in Greece. I have never ceased to wonder at the amazing enterprise of my Greek friends whom I have known all over the world, quick-brained and adventurous, often starting in life with little behind them but an irrepressible ambition to achieve, marching with their

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packs as pioneers of petty trade in African jungles, steering a battered, hardly seaworthy hulk immersed below an obliterated load-line by its cargo of grain before the bunkers were distributed on top of it, smilingly undertaking a colossal deal in cotton with just a hair's-breadth between a fortune and bankruptcy, while, at home, the father or grandfather, like Laertes, prunes his olives and plants new cuttings of the currant vine. A people sober, thrifty, but ready to make great sacrifices for their country, helping one another in difficult times, but too individualistic to pull together. What might they not yet achieve if they would only leave politics alone and not get tired of hearing Aristides called just !

There are hardly any old buildings in Ithaca. The island lies in the earthquake zone, and has often been disastrously visited. In the days of the corsairs the chief town had been transferred to a lofty site above

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the bay, which has now long been abandoned. In the greater number of the Greek islands which were for centuries subject to piratical visitations the inhabitants established themselves for security in inaccessible positions. The present town is thus comparatively recent. A good deal of old material has, however, been made to serve again, and squared stones, evidently brought from ancient buildings, have been utilized in modern construction.

If the Ithaca of to-day was, as I hope to establish, the Ithaca of Homer, the process of disafforestation has there, as elsewhere in Greece, altered the character of the landscape. No mountain in the island could to-day be described as *εἰνοσίφυλλον* or *καταειμένον ὕλην* as was Neriton in the *Odyssey*, nor, though there is still a fair amount of small oak growing on the high ground near the rock of Korax, would the swine of Eumaeus grow so fat on the acorns to-day. The

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woods have been destroyed by fires in the dry season accidentally, and perhaps in old days deliberately by ignorant goat-herds eager only to extend their pasture. Little more than a century ago the mountain range in Cephallenia, which rises in rocky folds now washed bare by winter rains to its highest point in Monte Nero, was covered with a great forest which burned for many consecutive days. Calymnos was known to Ovid, a yachtsman in the Aegean, as *sylvis umbrosa Calymne*, and there is reason to believe that the Greek islands generally were once well-wooded. I have myself seen remnants of trunks and big roots on treeless Hymettus, and have traversed in Arcadia wide areas of carbonized woodland. The loss of her forests has been one of the tragedies of Greece.

None the less, in spite of a deficiency of natural springs for which disafforestation may be responsible, the island is very green.

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The rainfall is considerable. Lentisk and arbutus and all the scented herbs that haunt the hills of Greece defy a scanty soil. The cypress has been freely planted and is a characteristic feature. On terraces laboriously constructed to retain the soil the olive flourishes and reaches a monumental age. There are trees which are reported to be a thousand years old. During a first walk into the country after our arrival I was struck with the length of their leaves, and realized how appropriate here was Homer's epithet *τανύφυλλος*. It was in the afternoon of a perfect day following the storm. The grey-green of the olives and the intense green of the cypresses, contrasting with the blue-white limestone rocks veined with purple shadows against a turquoise sea, touched us with the enchantment of Greece. In spite of the heat the clean translucent air was exhilarating, and we all fell in love with Ithaca at first sight.

CHAPTER II

SOME POSTULATES REGARDING THE HOMERIC POEMS

Before examining the contentions advanced by Dörpfeld and those who follow him in supporting his theory that the modern Itháki or Thiáki is not the Ithaca of Homer, it may be opportune to clear the ground by advancing certain postulates. In the first place I make no claim to engage in the controversy as a specialist with the equipment of those distinguished scholars who have devoted their lives to the analysis of the Homeric poems. I have indeed studied some of the appreciations of what is known as the higher criticism with a proper sense of humility. But I approach the matter rather in the spirit, if I may

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modestly claim it, of a man of letters, who is intimately familiar with his favourite book, the *Odyssey*. It is, of course, the *Odyssey* which has mainly to be considered. But the two great epics are interdependent to an extent which will make frequent references to the *Iliad* inevitable.

I assume it to be now generally accepted, since the discovery of Homeric or Mycenaean Troy by Dr. Dörpfeld in 1893, and other significant revelations of archæology, that the Trojan War was a historical fact. The gradual deciphering of Hittite records, in which appear names apparently identifiable with those of the Achæan period, makes it probable that the completion of that work in the near future will throw new light on the relations of Hittites and Achæans, and will afford further confirmation of the truth of much which the nineteenth century was invited to regard as fiction. To-day everything seems rather to

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point to corroboration of the traditions which furnished the matter of the Homeric epics, and if that be so, we are also encouraged to believe that the far more recent tradition of a living Homer will also triumph over the negative criticism of a hundred years ago.

It is not necessary for the present purpose to venture on debatable ground and to discuss the question of a single authorship of the two poems, even if I may confess that the arguments assembled in favour of diversity have never seemed to me very conclusive. The *Iliad* appears to be undoubtedly anterior to the *Odyssey*, and of the two it offers more plausible evidence to justify a presumption of composite character, or at any rate of ample interpolations. But the more highly developed literary structure and unity of the *Odyssey* does not seem necessarily to transcend what might be anticipated from the evolution of a poet's art within a single life.

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A number of apparent discrepancies have been zealously collected by the advocates of dual or plural authorship for the two poems. It has been pointed out that though there is a single reference to the treasures of Thebes, there is no other evidence in the *Iliad* of any knowledge of an Egypt which was familiar to the author of the *Odyssey*. It is in the latter also that Sikania and the Sikels make their first appearance. To such a contention it would seem sufficient to reply that the occasion does not arise in the *Iliad* story as it does in the *Odyssey* to make contact with those countries or their inhabitants. Again, we are told that consultations of the oracle are unknown to the men of the *Iliad*, whereas in the *Odyssey* we learn that Agamemnon had taken counsel of Apollo at Pytho, while Odysseus was reported by himself, speaking in an assumed personality, to have gone to Dodona to learn the will of Zeus. The Pythian shrine

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with its *λάινος οὐδὸς* is, however, mentioned in both poems in similar terms, and in the Iliad Zeus is invoked as the ruler of Dodona where dwell the Selli, his interpreters. Not much importance can be attached to the argument that more varieties of tree are specified in the Odyssey than in the Iliad, in view of the much greater part which landscape and country life play in the former. Nor need there be great difficulty in accounting for the more frequent references which it contains to iron. The Odyssey deals with conditions of life which were experiences of actual observation, while the Iliad is concerned with battles and with warriors of the age of bronze, the name of which metal to signify a weapon may well have survived the gradual substitution of iron. The latter certainly appears to have been in general use before any date which can appropriately be assigned to the Iliad, and though the rhapsodist, like the primi-

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tive artist, would only derive the setting of his poem from contemporary life, it is nevertheless permissible to assume that in dealing with ancient tradition at a time when the substitution of iron was still recent and perhaps not yet complete, he might have deliberately adhered to weapons of bronze. The apparent inconsistency between the claims of Idomeneus in the Iliad (XIII, 449 ff.) to be the grandson of Minos, the son of Zeus, and the description of Minos in one passage in the Odyssey (XIX, 179) as the *friend* of Zeus and not as the *son*, disappears if we read the word *ὀαριστής*, which has been translated by *friend*, as really meaning in *direct and intimate converse with*. In an earlier passage in the Odyssey (XI, 568) Minos has been directly called the son of Zeus. It may be that the philologist can make out a better case by detecting differences in the use of language. But such examples as have been cited of

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apparent inconsistencies in the two texts can hardly be regarded as convincing. The issue is, in any case, not material to a study of the unity of the *Odyssey*.

In such a study we should always have in mind that we are not concerned with a real *Odysseus*, with what he may have done or said, but solely with what the poet who chose him for the central figure of his poem has made him say or do. Critics and philologists have been too little disposed to consider the *Odyssey* from the poet's point of view. Because certain books of the epic deal with conditions in Ithaca, with *Telemachus* and his journey to the Peloponnese, and others are devoted to the wanderings of *Odysseus*, while the later books are occupied with the slaying of the suitors, they distinguish between a *Telemacheia*, an *Odysseia*, and, if such a word is permissible, a *Mnesterophonia*, as though these were a series of distinct rhapsodies strung together at a certain period

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into a consecutive narration.¹ They also refer to the older and the more recent sections of the poem as though such distinctions were definitely recognizable and established by general acceptance. I have even seen it maintained by German critics that the latest *Bearbeiter* of the *Odyssey* probably lived in Corinth or Euboea. Ingenuity may be expended on finding many things in a text of which its author was entirely innocent. Cryptograms have, we know, been detected in certain folios of Shakespeare. But why, it may be asked, this anxiety to disintegrate? Rhapsodies dealing with episodes of the heroic age existed, no doubt, before Homer was born. Centuries before Tennyson composed his "Idylls of the King" there was the Morte

¹ Even in antiquity so eminent a critic as Aristarchus as well as Aristophanes of Byzantium believed that the 24th Book of the *Odyssey* was a later addition and that the original poem ended with line 296 of the 23rd Book.

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d'Arthur of Mallory and the "French Book" from which it was derived, and a whole library of chivalrous adventure. After all whether we speak of Homer or of the author of the *Odyssey* or of a *Bearbeiter* of old material does not matter much. A great creative poet of early Greece did in the epic form what Shakespeare did in the dramatic with old stories and legends, and following the tradition of the ancients I prefer to conceive him as a living Homer.

The *Odyssey* itself is one and indivisible. It is splendidly conceived as a dramatic whole, and it would be as unreasonable to separate the parts, the fantastic from the actual, as it would be to divorce the fairy story from the real life in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." A great creative genius cast the story in the form in which it has come down to us. There is a brief prologue in heaven and a first act (Bks. I to IV) which presents the scene in Ithaca. It

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reveals the situation which has been brought about by the long absence of the paramount chief and lends greater poignancy to the recital of his wanderings which is to follow in the second act (Bks. V to XV). These books contain the fairy story, as the late Dr. Leaf¹ would have it, and yet not all or only a fairy story, but rather the interpretation in terms of imaginative poetry of certain mysteries of the sea, of lands of rumour or surmise as yet unfamiliar to Greek seamen. Not very much less extravagant after all are the stories told without suggestion of incredibility in Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana*; that, for instance, of the mysterious race whose heads did not rise above their shoulders, and whose mouths were in the middle of their breasts; or that of the city of Manoa which Juan Martinez entered at noon, travelling through it all that day and on the next from sun-

¹ *Homer and History*, W. Leaf, p. 182.

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rise to sunseting before he came to the palace of the Inca. At the end of the sixteenth century even stranger tales of lands unvisited could still find credence in a world that had not done with dreams. With the third act we come back to actual life; the return of Odysseus, the sifting of friend from foe, the slaying of the suitors and the recognition by Penelope (Bks. XVI to XXIV).

I do not for a moment seek to maintain that there have been no interpolations, no remodellings of the text.¹ But I cannot

¹ Some retouches there undoubtedly have been, perhaps many. Take, for instance, the passage (Bk. VII, 54-66) setting forth the genealogy of Alcinous and Arete, children of the same parents, *ἐκ τοκήων τῶν αὐτῶν*, who are also referred to as brother and sister by Hesiod. Being of supernatural descent, legend no doubt required that they should maintain the purity of a semi-divine race, like Sigmund and Sieglinde. Athena explains (l, 64) that Rexenor, the brother of Alcinous, had died childless, *ἄκουνον*. The line which follows, *νυμφίον ἐν μεγάρῳ μίαν οἶην*

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conceive a story so dramatically told to be a mere patchwork or a stringing together of beads. There are hardly any contradictions or inconsistencies in the sequence of four and twenty books; there is nothing which savours of grafting or inappropriate insertion. The scheme of narration is thought out to the least detail. The unity is complete. Viewed from the aspect of pure literature, of great poetry, it seems impossible to come to any other conclusion concerning the *Odyssey*.

As regards the *Iliad* in its special relation for topographical purposes to the *Odyssey*,

παῖδα λιπόντα, contradictory in itself, has surely been inserted in conformity with the more delicate sensibility of later times, so as to change the relationship of Alcinous and Arete into that of uncle and niece. The opening words of line 66, originally, I apprehend *τὴν δ' Ἀρήτην Ἀλκίνοος*, were at the same time inverted and became *Ἀρήτην τὴν δ' Ἀλκίνοος*. Some amendment in the subsequent line 146 then also became inevitable.

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I shall, without recapitulating the arguments,¹ assume it to be now generally accepted that the catalogue of the ships in the latter part of the second book, which would be quite complete in itself if it ended at the four hundred and eighty-second line, has been interpolated from other sources. It was known to the ancients as the "Boeotia," and was evidently inserted with the intention of giving special prominence to a people who were not in the Achæan epoch to be found in Boeotia, the occupants of which were known as Cadmeians. The same principle must be applied to one or two passages the inclusion of which would not be justified until the Catalogue of the Ships had been incorporated. I follow Leaf in believing that the enumeration of the Trojan forces in Book II (816-877) stood in its place from the first, and that the

¹ For these refer to Leaf, *Homer and History*; and Allen, *The Homeric Catalogue of Ships*.

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lesser catalogue in Book XIII (685-722), to which he gives the name of the "Ionia," is, like the "Boeotia," an interpolation. But even if the two Greek catalogues do not represent the real tradition of the Trojan war and are, in fact, in contradiction with the rest of the Iliad, these additions have nevertheless their historic and geographical value for the epoch to which they belong, of which we can only say that it is later than that of the text which will generally be spoken of as "Homer."

Recent revelations of Minoan sea-power and civilization have revolutionized many ideas which long held the field regarding the early history of the Aegean races. Further research may yet throw more light on migration and processes of settlement in continental Greece, the islands and Asia Minor of that remarkable stock which, with its several characteristically differing groups, was to constitute the Hellenic people. I

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do not propose here to discuss the various theories of original occupancy, of subsequent colonization and displacement. I accept the conclusions of Dr. Leaf in his *Homer and History* regarding the coming of the Achaeans, who were among the earliest invaders descending from the northwest, and who, like the Normans in later time in Italy and Sicily, established themselves as the dominant element in portions of Thessaly, in Locris, Aetolia and the Peloponnese, and pushed on into the western islands. Only with regard to the latter extension I must hesitate to accept his conclusion as to the point of departure on the mainland from which the kingdom of Odysseus was occupied. These strong and assimilative invaders, originally it may be few in numbers but reinforced by kindred immigrants, conquered and absorbed Minoan settlements on the mainland and seem in certain cases to have established a sort of

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federal union with some of the old Minoan chieftains, who accepted the overlordship of the paramount Achaean prince. They succeeded to and adopted the conditions and refinements of life which had been brought from Crete to continental Greece. How far these Achaeans, who were eventually pushed onwards by pressure from the north towards Asia, were racially connected with the Ionians, with whom they seem to have had much in common, does not call for investigation here, nor have we to unravel the perplexities of the Dorian invasion by which the earlier settlers were eventually overwhelmed.

There is one more claim which the following chapters may or may not be held to vindicate. If it can be established that the poet refers to natural features which can be precisely identified, and to places which there is no difficulty in identifying, his personal knowledge of Ithaca must be

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assumed. Conversations with mariners or merchants could hardly have provided him with such details as the *Odyssey* includes. There are many which would appeal to the eye of the poet, but which would hardly have been noticed by the seafaring man. Ancient tradition maintained that Homer had sojourned in the island, and I am persuaded that cumulative evidence can be adduced to show that that tradition was well founded.

CHAPTER III

LEUCAS OR ITHĀKI

ναιετάω δ' Ἰθάκην εὐδείελον· ἐν δ' ὄρος αὐτῇ
Νήριτον εἰνοσίφυλλον, ἀριπρεπές· ἀμφὶ δε νῆσοι
πολλαὶ ναιετάουσι μάλα σχεδὸν ἀλλήλησι,
Δουλίχιόν τε Σάμη τε καὶ ὑλήεσσα Ζάκυνθος.
αὐτὴ δε χθαμαλὴ πανυπερτάτη εἰν ἀλλὴ κεῖται
πρὸς ζόφον, αἱ δε τ' ἀνευθε πρὸς ἡῶ τ' ἡέλιόν τε,
τρηχεῖ, ἀλλ' ἀγαθὴ κουροτρόφος·

Od. IX, 21-27.

We have now to consider the theory which is associated with the name of its eminent exponent, Dr. Dörpfeld. It has been accepted by a number of Homeric students, and in our own country by no less an authority than the late Dr. Leaf, who admitted, however, that he had been converted after considerable hesitation.¹ It

¹ Leaf, *Homer and History*, p. 157.

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is also indirectly supported by the categorical pronouncement in an article on Ithaca in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to the effect that, "no amount of ingenuity can reconcile the description of the Odyssey with the actual topography of the island." It may therefore seem to require some courage to adopt a diametrically opposite view. And yet, after sailing over these waters and visiting every part of the island, I have been forced to the conclusion that it would require even greater ingenuity to establish that the Ithaca of the Odyssey is anywhere else than where tradition has placed it, or that Homer's geography is in essentials at fault.

The Dörpfeld theory, broadly stated, is that Leucas, also known as Leucadia and Santa Maura, was the Ithaca of Homer. The present Itháki, long popularly converted into Thiáki, was Homer's Same. Cephallenia, which still has a district called Douliche, was Doulichion. Zante was Zakynthos. To

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justify this transference of names we are invited to accept a bold hypothesis. It is presumed that some strong pressure by new invaders from the north displaced the old populations, and that when driven south they took their old place-names with them. Instances can be adduced of some transpositions of place-names on the mainland. But here among the islands a double transfer is involved. Not only must the population expelled from Ithaca-Leucas have occupied and given the old name to Same-Ithaca, but a number of people, apparently crowded out of the latter island, carried the name of Same to Doulichion-Cephalenia, where the city, plain and promontory opposite the southern section of Ithaca, thereafter became known as Samos. The old name of Doulichion eventually disappeared from the whole island in favour of the racial name of Cephalenia.

From the passage in the ninth book of the *Odyssey* (ll. 19-27) in which Odysseus

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declares himself to the Phaeacians, Dörpfeld assumes that Ithaca must have been the most western of the islands, thus interpreting *πρὸς ζόφον*, and the most distant from the open sea, *χθαμαλή*, in relation to a coast which the ancient geographers believed ran from east to west. This belief, it may be parenthetically observed, would be rather less wide of the mark if Leucas be regarded as a part of the continent. It has nothing to justify it if Leucas is an island.

Dörpfeld argues that Leucas corresponds most closely to the Homeric description of Ithaca. The recurrent line in the *Odyssey* in which visitors are repeatedly asked by what vessel they had been conveyed thither, since they certainly did not come by land, would have been a reasonable one if addressed to them in Leucas, between which and the rising ground opposite are lagoons which humble wayfarers might have forded, whereas distinguished travellers would only arrive by

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boat. Finally he submits that the little island of Dhascalio, which lies in what is now known as the Ithaca Channel, cannot be the island of Asteris to which the suitors proceeded in order to watch for Telemachus on his return from Pylos. It is a low-lying rock barely two hundred yards in length, rising only some ten feet above the water, and too near the Cephallenian shore to be described as in mid-channel. It has neither wind-blown heights nor double harbours, whereas these may be found in the island of Arkudi, which lies between Leucas and the present Ithaca.

The points, therefore, which a defender of the old tradition has to consider are : firstly, could Leucas have been the Homeric Ithaca ? Secondly, does the island now known as Itháki fail to correspond geographically with the position adopted by Homer for the island of Odysseus ? Thirdly, can some solution other than identification with Cephallenia be

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found for the riddle of Doulichion, which puzzled the ancients as much as it perplexes the moderns? Fourthly, can he establish that the modern Itháki furnishes abundant evidence that it was the island which Homer described? If so, he will also have incidentally to deal with the difficulty presented by the traditional identification of Dhascalio island with Asteris.

The problem, a minor one as it seems to me, involved in the recurrent line οὐ μὲν γὰρ τί σε πεζὸν ὁῖομαι ἐνθαδ' ἰκέσθαι, *for I cannot suppose that you came here on foot*, I propose to deal with at once. If the transposition of Ithaca to Leucas were not contestable, Dörpfeld's interpretation of the line would be very satisfactory. I remember when he first suggested it to me some thirty-seven years ago, I felt almost persuaded to be a Leucadian. But is it really necessary to seek for an explanation at all? The amplification of the question "In what vessel did you come here?" by

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the addition "since you can only reach an island by sea," is quite in the epic spirit. An almost identical expression appears to be still habitually used by the natives of Capri, themselves of Greek origin, when they inquire of a visitor from whence he has come.¹

To those who may hesitate to admit that this rather platitudinous repetition is consistent with the naivety of epic language, another possible justification for the question might be suggested. Ithaca was not only the name of the island, but it was also that of the principal and perhaps in Homeric times the only town, ἄστυ Ἰθάκης, the social and political centre. Its site must, I hope to show, be placed on the ascending shore above what has always been known as the Bay of Polis, on the western side of the island.

¹ The Russian archæologist, M. Stepanow, tells me that on several occasions when he has been asked from where he came the question has been amplified by the words "*perché non e mica venuto per terra* (for you certainly did not come by land).

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There are, however, some seven or eight other havens in Ithaca to the east and south, at which it would be much nearer for a vessel from the mainland to put in, and a casual traveller landed at any of these would have a long way to go on foot before reaching the town, near to which the palace of Odysseus was situated. But persons of importance visiting the paramount chief would be conveyed directly to the harbour of Polis, *the* town. It would then be quite natural to express the presumption that they had not arrived on foot. I do not, however, press this suggestion, and feel quite satisfied with the less elaborate explanation.

A reply to the question whether Leucas could have been the Homeric Ithaca depends to some extent on the interpretation of the passage quoted at the head of this chapter, which contains the most definite geographical indications available. Freely rendered into English with such expansion as is necessary

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to bring out the full force of important words, its sense is as follows :

I dwell in Ithaca, which stands out clear for all to see. Therein is a mountain, Neriton, clad with forest, a conspicuous mass. And round it are islands many in number, quite near to one another, Doulichion and Same and wooded Zakynthos. Ithaca itself lies near to the mainland, the highest up of them in the sea towards the gloom, and the others away both towards the dawn and the sun ; a rugged land, but a good nurse for manhood.

The word *χθαμαλή* in this passage, which etymologically should mean low, is interpreted by Strabo, who as a Greek must be accepted as an authority on his own language, as signifying “near the mainland.” In a mountainous land like Greece to those looking seaward towards a lofty horizon the nearest objects are the lowest in the picture. The use of *low* for *near* by seamen has moreover survived in the modern language.

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“Near the mainland” would certainly be true of Leucas if it could be regarded as an island. If, however, it was not so regarded in Homer’s day, and was recognized as part of the mainland, then *χθαμαλή* would be appropriately applied to Ithaca, which is only five miles south of what the ancients believed to be a peninsula.

If the words *παννπερτάτη πρὸς ζόφον* are to be interpreted *furthest to the west*, as Dörpfeld maintains or even, as Leaf would prefer, *towards the north and west*, such a description would only fit Leucas as an island if Homer, like the later geographers, believed that the mainland coast, independently of Leucas, ran east and west. Such a misreading of the compass must involve a similar shifting of the relative orientation of the islands, for Leucas really lies almost due north of Ithaca, and rather north-east of the greater part of Cephallenia. But we may also connect *πρὸς ζόφον* with *χθαμαλή*

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and interpret, "Ithaca lies near the mainland to the west of it, furthest up (i.e. to the north) of them all." The interpretation of ζόφος as the murky north is the more attractive; Leaf defends it on grounds that the "gloom" is here a poet's term, and he appreciates the opposition not only to the dawn, but also to the sun. Strabo seems to have had no doubt that the region of gloom was in the north, and he assumes the sun to indicate the south.¹ Support for this interpretation may be derived from another passage in the Odyssey, where almost the same words occur:

ἴσασι δέ μιν μάλα πολλοί,
 ἡμὲν ὅσοι ναίονσι πρὸς ἡῶ τ' ἡέλιόν τε
 ἡδ' ὅσοι μετόπισθε ποτὶ ζόφον ἡερόεντα.

Od. XIII, 239-41.

There are right many who know it (Ithaca) whether among those who dwell both towards the dawn and the sun, or those who dwell behind towards the murky gloom.

¹ οἷον ὑπὲρ πάσας τετραμμένην πρὸς ἄρκτον. Strabo, *Graecia*, p. 454.

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Now if *the gloom* here meant the west, seeing that Italy was in Homer's age little more than a shadow-land, the only people who could be said to be west of Ithaca would be the inhabitants of the northern horn of Cephallenia, and it would be quite out of place to vaunt the familiarity of so near a neighbour as testimony to the fame of Ithaca. The reference, however, becomes pertinent if *behind* means *beyond* Ithaca as seen by a seafarer coming up from the south, and if *πρὸς ζόφον* be interpreted "to the north."¹ It would be perfectly con-

¹ There is a passage in the Iliad relating to the flight of birds, in which the same words occur, εἴτ' ἐπὶ δεξι' ἴωσι πρὸς ἥῳ ἡέλιόν τε εἴτ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τοιγε πρὸς ζόφον ἡερόεντα (Il. XII, 239-40), but here, if the observer of birds followed the ritual which seems to have been adopted in later times of facing the north, "*to the left towards the murky gloom*" should mean the west. Strabo, however, does not seem so to interpret it, as he quotes the passage to confirm that the sun means the south. In Od. X. 190, moreover, ζόφος as darkness is opposed to dawn.

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sistent with local conditions that Homer when speaking of Ithaca should only consider three points of the compass, the north, the east and the south, for west of the dominion of Odysseus all was a distant and unknown world. In any case, whichever interpretation of *ποτὶ ζόφον* be adopted the arguments derived from this passage in favour of Leucas can be used with equal truth of Ithaca, the insular character of which cannot be contested.

It seems hardly open to doubt that in Homeric times Leucas, though clearly an independent geographical unit, was not regarded as an island. It is even doubtful whether it should strictly speaking be so defined to-day, though a channel several times cleared and closed again in former ages, has of recent years been dredged to a depth of fifteen feet through the shallow lagoon and sandbanks which lie between the rising ground on either side. It was

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really an out-thrust of the mainland, like Athos, known to Homer as the ἀκτὴ ἡπείροιο, the latter word not being here a proper name. Apart from the evidence of Homer, the tradition of its having been a peninsula joined to the mainland by an isthmus is supported by an impressive unanimity of ancient testimony; that of Scylax of the Periplus and of Strabo among geographers, and that of such authorities as Thucydides, Polybius, Livy and Pliny. The Acarnanians, according to Strabo, replaced the original Leleges and Teleboans in Leucas, and were in turn dispossessed in the seventh century B.C. by Corinthian colonists, led by Cypselus, who cut a canal through the isthmus which united it to the continent. This canal, which was known as the *dioryctos*, had become silted up and unserviceable before the Peloponnesian war, since Thucydides speaks of the isthmus across which ships were transported,¹

¹ Thucydides, Bks. III, 81, and IV. 8.

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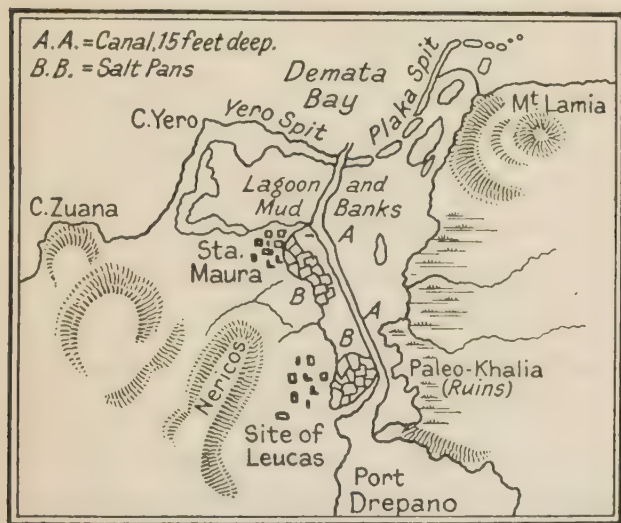
and it apparently remained for a long period out of use. Livy, referring to the siege of Leucas in 197 B.C., speaks of Leucadia, once a peninsula, as having been converted into an island by an artificial channel.¹ The *dioryctos* was, no doubt, once more cleared by the Romans, as it appears from Strabo that the canal and a bridge crossing it were in existence in his day. The Venetians later probably dredged it again.

The question arises where precisely was the isthmus through which the Corinthians cut. Colonel Leake assumes it to have been the northern rim of the lagoon known as the Plaka Spit, through which there is a passage open to the sea, because its breadth is approximately three stadia, the length which Pliny assigns to the canal. This assumption has led him to

¹ *Leucadia nunc insula et vadoso freto quod per-
fossum manu est ab Acarnania divisa, tum peninsula
erat occidentis regione arctis facibus cohaerens
Acarnaniae.* Livy, XXXIII, c. 17. See also Pliny,
Naturalis Historia, IV, 2.

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charge Pliny and Strabo with inaccuracy for having stated that Leucas was on the isthmus. It is probable, however, that they were right.



PLAN OF LEUCAS.

While it is possible that an existing passage through the Plaka may have been deepened to facilitate navigation, there is good reason to believe that the isthmus referred to by classical authorities, through which the *dioryctos* was originally cut, was to the

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south of the lagoon, between the ruins at Paleo Khalia and the site of Leucas, which replaced the still older Nericos. Livy represents Leucas as situated on the isthmus, and Strabo places it "where once was an isthmus and where now is a channel with a bridge spanning it."¹ Traces of a causeway and of a bridge were found by Leake near the site of the city in 1806. The necessity for holding and defending such a passage from the mainland into the peninsula would account for the position of the ancient city. Leake was successful in tracing nearly the whole line of the urban enclosure, extending from the higher ground to the lagoon in accordance with the description of Livy.² Still higher up he found polygonal walls, the construction of which showed that they belonged to

¹ Strabo, p. 452.

² In iis augustiis (i.e. where the channel had been cut) Leucas posita est colli adplicata verso in orientem et Acarnaniam; ima urbis plana sunt, jacentia ad mare, etc. Livy, XXXIII, c. 17.

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a very remote period. These older remains were no doubt part of the more ancient Nericos. Strabo affirms that the Corinthian colonists changed the name and the position of Nericos. But here he is evidently in error, since Thucydides makes it clear that the name of Nericos was still in use during the Peloponnesian war.¹ The change of site probably meant no more than an enlargement of area when the walls were extended to the lagoon.

These conclusions lend special interest to the passage in the twenty-fourth book of the *Odyssey*, where Laertes laments that he could not have stood by his son at the slaying of the suitors, in the full vigour of his strength :

οἷος Νήρικον εἶλον, εὐκτίμενον πτολιέθρον,
ἀκτὴν ἡπείροιο, Κεφαλλήνεσσιν ἀνάσσων.

Od. XXIV, 377-8.

Such a man as I was when I took Nericos, the well-built city on the promontory of the mainland, ruling over the Cephallenians.

¹ Thuc., Bk III, ch. 7. Of Asopios. αὐτὸς δὲ πλεύσας ἐς Λευκάδα καὶ ἀπόβασιν εἰς Νήρικον ποιησάμενος . . . διαφθείρεται.

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Its importance lies not only in the direct testimony to the mainland and against the insular character of Leucas in Homer's time, but also in the fact that it seems to leave little doubt that the annexation of the peninsula to the Kingdom of Odysseus was traditionally regarded as subsequent to the colonization of the islands. Laertes is indeed represented as so old that he had long retired from public affairs in favour of his son, but unless he could be considered as one of the original conquistadors, which would make the arrival of the Achaeans in the islands only a generation anterior to the Trojan war, it does not seem possible to accept Leaf's view that their conquest was effected from Leucas.

Nericos, and later the larger city which replaced it, was obviously the key of the whole area, whether peninsula or island, which could not be held until the passages of the lagoons had been secured. It re-

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mained ever after the principal town, and owing to its dominant position, had Leucas been Ithaca, it would be reasonable to suppose that the residence of the ruling prince would have been in its immediate neighbourhood. But Nericos cannot be identified with the ἀστὺ Ἰθάκης, and it continued to be known by its old name from Homer's day down to historic times. Probability and the evidence of Aristotle agree in suggesting that the Achaeans descended from Dodona, where they were first established, by the valley of the Achelous into the alluvial plain where grass and grain were abundant, and that thence, after they had acquired the habit of the sea, they migrated to the western islands. The conquest of Leucas, too near to be left in hostile hands, would follow in due course. The question will be further considered in the following chapter in connection with Doulichion.

In face of the confirmation by so many

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ancient authorities of its non-insular character, can we believe that the poet of the *Odyssey* would have described Leucas as ἀμφιάλος, *surrounded by the sea*, an epithet which is four times repeated as characteristic of Ithaca. Nor would εὐδείελος, clear to see, be very suitable to Leucas, which to vessels coasting from the south or north appears to be an integral part of the mainland. Both epithets on the other hand are entirely appropriate to Itháki. Κραναή and τροχεῖα might be used of either, but they suit Ithaca best.

Before leaving this portion of the subject we must also consider a passage in the *Iliad*, or rather in the catalogue of the Greek ships, which may have some bearing on the issue (*Il. II*, 631–5). Odysseus, we are there told, led the stout-hearted Cephallenians from Ithaca with its four divisions, from Zakynthos, from Samos, and οἱ τ' ἡπειρον ἔχον ἥδ' ἀντιπέραι' ἐνέμοντο. *Those who*

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held the mainland and the coasts over against it.

Now, what is the meaning of ἀντιέγραα? It should indicate some region of occupation differing in character from the mainland itself. It can hardly refer to coastal islands because Doulichion and the Echinaeae have already been disposed of in the preceding lines 625-30, where they are included in the Dominion of Meges. It has been translated "the shores over against the islands," but this would be merely tautologous, as they are included in the "mainland." May it not rather refer to the Acte, which, though linked by an isthmus to the continent, yet remained an independent unit?

The second point, whether the island now known as Itháki fails geographically to fulfil the conditions of the Homeric Ithaca, has been largely covered in considering the first point, namely, whether Leucas could have been the island of the Odyssey. Generally

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it may be accepted that whatever arguments have been put forward in favour of Leucas from a geographical point of view hold equally good for Itháki. It lies near the mainland. It is furthest up towards the north in relation to the other large islands, in the sense that the navigator coasting up from the south or issuing from the Gulf of Corinth would see it uppermost on his way to Leucas or to Thesprotia beyond. It is certainly not incorrect to argue as Dr. Leaf does, that Cephallenia envelops Ithaca from the west, but it is equally true that although a horn or promontory of Cephallenia runs northward parallel to the west coast of Ithaca, the great mass of the former island lies well to the south and south-west. If the orientation of the islands be moved round nearly a quarter of the compass, in conformity with the ancient belief that the mainland coast ran east and west, Ithaca would be brought still more to the

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north of Cephallenia. But the violence to the instinct of direction which such a postulate involves, indispensable though it may be to those who would place Leucas west of the islands, is not necessary in order to make Ithaca fill the position which was assigned to it by Homer. If the Ionian poet ever sailed to the islands, as I must believe he did, he would, after rounding the Peloponnese, have passed the greater mass of Cephallenia before he reached the southern point of Ithaca.

The other islands, many in number which lie round it, are *both* towards the dawn and the sun, the east and the south. The double $\tau\epsilon$ here should not escape notice. The mountain of Neriton, referred to in the same passage as ἀριπρεπές, *very conspicuous*, must, I have no doubt, be identified with Mount Anoi. M. Bérard, it is true, sees Neriton in Mount Merovugli or S. Stefano in the southern half of the island. But the great

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mass of Anoi, in the northern section, a spur of which constitutes the isthmus, is the really conspicuous mountain system of the island.¹

If the arguments which have been advanced against the assumption that Leucas was Homer's Ithaca are sound, it follows that the latter island can have been no other than the present Itháki or Thiáki, and it will not be necessary to look for Homer's Same elsewhere than in Cephallenia where the name remains attached to an ancient city site, the walls of which can still be seen to-day. It would appear as though in the old dominion of Odysseus the name of

¹ According to Admiralty chart No. 203 Anoi is 2,066 feet high, and St. Stefano 2,135. Dr. Leaf, however, gives the respective mountain altitudes as 2,645 feet for the northern mountain and 2,200 for the southern. It is possible that a more recent survey has determined the northern mountain to be the higher of the two, but in any case there is no question that it is the more conspicuous.

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the geographical unit and of its chief town were generally identical. This seems to have been the case both in Ithaca and Same, and after the rebuilding of Nericos, both the Acte and the town became known as Leucas.

Bérard, in his fascinating study "*Les Phéniciens et l'Odysée*," has made out a strong case for the Semitic origin of the name Same or Samos, which is found again in the large island in the Aegean as well as in the smaller Samothrace. It signifies lofty, that is, with high mountains. He regards this place-name as one of the many taken over by the Greeks from the Phoenicians, their predecessors in the commercial exploration of these waters, who had established ports of call in a number of the islands. Same on the more sheltered eastern side of Cephallenia would seem a more appropriate station to the primitive coaster than Argostoli on the west which can only be approached from the open sea.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIDDLE OF DOULICHION

THE COMING OF THE ACHAEANS. THE CEPHALLENIANS

There are nine references in the *Odyssey* to Doulichion, in four of which it only appears as one of a group of islands together with Same and Zakynthos, the neighbours of Ithaca. In the *Iliad*, where it is only mentioned in the Boeotia, or catalogue of the Greek ships, Doulichion is linked with the Echinaeae, the modern Echinades off the maritime plain of the Achelous, in a manner which suggests geographical proximity to that group. In that passage it is not directly said to be an island, but the inclusion of Doulichion in the *Odyssey* among the islands which lie round Ithaca seems to leave little doubt

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that the author regarded it as such.¹ The name derived from an Ionic form of δόλιχος should mean Long Island. This is one of the reasons why Bérard has sought to identify it with Meganisi, which Strabo tells us was called Taphious. One of the Echinades now bears the name of Makri, which has the same meaning. Makronisi is still a common name for islands. In the Odyssey it is described as *rich in grain* and *rich in grass*.

The Homeric Doulichion must have controlled, if it did not actually comprehend a large and prosperous area supporting a wealthy community, since of the hundred and eight aspirants to the hand of Penelope,

¹ I do not feel clear as to why Leake has asserted that there is no proof either in the Iliad or the Odyssey that Doulichion, although the head of an insular confederacy, was in itself an island. He apparently means to suggest that the name was used collectively to include a group of islands, dependent on a centre which may have been on the mainland. *Northern Greece*, III, p. 51.

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fifty-two were said to hail from there as against fifty-six from the other three islands. It was also evidently an important commercial maritime centre at the time when the Boeotian catalogue was composed, seeing that Doulichion and the holy Echinaae, which are represented as a single unit, sent forty ships to Troy, while the Cephallenians of the other islands and the mainland under Odysseus are only credited with furnishing twelve. It seems clear that at the time when the catalogue was drawn up, Doulichion had become detached from the combination which formed the Homeric dominion of Odysseus. The Boeotia places the forty ships under the command of Meges, the son of Phyleus, who had left Elis the land of the Epeians, in consequence of a dispute with his father, and had gone to live in Doulichion. In the equally post-Homeric catalogue of the Ionia, Meges also appears as the leader of the Epeians (Il. XIII, 691-2).

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He is, however, unknown to the author of the *Odyssey* who mentions Akastos as the prince of Doulichion. I need not, therefore, further discuss here the perplexities of the Meges legend.

The distribution of suitors and of ships which both the author of the *Odyssey* and the compiler of the catalogue must have had good reason for making, have served to give plausibility to the contention of Hellanicus,¹ followed by the supporters of the Dörpfeld theory, that Doulichion must have been Cephallenia, the largest of the islands in which, moreover, the name Douliche is found attached to a village opposite the harbour of Polis. The proportional argument is less favourable to the suggestion of Andron, which Pausanias adopts, that Doulichion was one of the Cephallenian cities.² But how could Cephallenia have

¹ Hellanicus of Mitylene, a contemporary of Herodotus.

² Pausanias, *Eliaca*, c. 15.

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been grouped with the Echinades in the catalogue? Baffled topographers have even sought to identify the elusive Doulichion with Leucas. But Homer had otherwise disposed of the Acte, which moreover, as a comparatively recent conquest by Laertes, could hardly have mustered fifty-two suitors or furnished forty ships.

There is still something to be learned from the texts. Telemachus, in claiming his privilege to assign the bow of Odysseus to whom he chooses, distinguishes between the Achaean nobles of rocky Ithaca, and those who are lords in the islands over against Elis (Od. XXI, 346-7). The use of the plural here seems to exclude a reference to Zakynthos, which is geographically isolated without dependencies. The author must therefore have had in mind the chain of coastal islands, the Echinades and Oxya, which lie almost on the direct line between Ithaca and what was then the north coast of Elis. That this was

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so receives confirmation from the application of the very same words directly to Doulichion and the Echinades in the catalogue of ships.

οἱ δ' ἐκ Δουλιχίου, Ἐχινάων θ' ἱεράων
νήσων, αἱ ναλοῦσι πέραν ἁλὸς Ἥλιδος ἄντα.

II. II, 625-6.

*Those from Doulichion and the Echinades, who dwell
across the sea opposite Elis.*

Again, Odysseus, in the assumed character of a Cretan, informs Eumaeus that he had left the court of King Pheidon in a ship which the Thesprotians were sending to Doulichion, rich in wheat. The crew behaved treacherously and bound him, intending to sell him as a slave, but he succeeded in escaping when they had landed in Ithaca to take their evening meal (Od. XIV, 334 ff.). This story would be perfectly consistent with geographical conditions, for Ithaca lies directly on the course of a vessel proceeding from Thesprotia to a Doulichion near

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the mouth of the Achelous, where lie the Echinades. He repeats the story of his own conveyance to Ithaca in a ship of the Thesprotians bound for Doulichion, when telling Penelope that her husband had gone to Dodona (Od. XIX, 290 ff.).

The evidence which can thus be derived from the texts regarding the position and resources of Doulichion is, if not very ample, cumulatively not to be despised, and much less is available regarding Same or Zakynthos. The deductions to be drawn from the various references may be summarized as follows: Doulichion was an island, grouped with if not actually one of the Echinades which lie along the Acarnanian coast and opposite Elis. Alternatively, we may regard Doulichion as the collective name of a subordinate insular state which included the Echinades, and of which the social centre might even have been, as Leake esteems possible, on the mainland. It was the seat of a numer-

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ous and prosperous community, with important maritime interests, which exported grain and forage. While Homer regarded it as part of the dominion of Odysseus it seems at some subsequent period to have become detached from the island kingdom.

We learn from Strabo that in his time one of the Echinades was called Dolicha, and this is confirmed by Stefanus of Byzantium. It was, Strabo says, opposite Oeniadae and the mouth of the Achelous, now the Aspropotamo. The small island called Makri would answer this description, but it has no ports, is surrounded with deep water, and lies three or four miles from the coast. Petala island, which is some three miles north of the present mouth of the Achelous, though little more than a rock three miles in length, rising at one point to 832 feet, offers admirable shelter for ships, both to the south and the north, with ready access to the lands watered by the Achelous and by a stream which flows

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into the strait from the hill of Oeniadae. Such a harbour would have provided a safe depôt and exporting station for the produce of the maritime plain. It used often to be visited by British warships. Of the whole coastal island group between Dragonera and Oxya Petala is the largest, and it is worthy of notice that until the beginning of the last century all these islands remained administratively dependent on Thiáki or Ithaca.

While Petala is not exactly opposite the actual mouth of the Achelous, it may more accurately be described as opposite Oeniadae, seeing that the hill on which that ancient city stands is nearly equi-distant from the river mouth and from the island. The actual outlet of the alluvial river which sweeps in a half-circle round the heights of Oeniadae may well have shifted to some extent since the Peloponnesian war, when the city was attacked by water,¹ and there is in any case

¹ Thuc., Bk. III, ch. 17.

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the other stream fed by springs in the hill, which traverses a big marsh and flows seaward towards Petala. This stream might have been assumed by the old geographers to be a branch of the Achelous. Strabo adds that owing to the alluvial deposit of the river, several of the Echinades have been absorbed in the mainland, as others would eventually be. Herodotus had indeed long before asserted that half the Echinades had been joined to the mainland, and Thucydides foretold that eventually they would all become eminences in the plain, a prophecy which is very far still from being fulfilled. To justify fully the presumption of Herodotus it would be necessary to go back a very long way in geographical time. But the Kunevimo hills opposite Petala and the Dione peninsula have probably been islands at a not very remote period. The tradition was preserved by Pliny, Demetrius Scephsius quoted by Strabo, and others that

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the headland Artemita, now known as Kurtzolari, the highest point of which rises to over 1,400 feet, had been an island, though by their day it had become a peninsula. It would hardly be permissible now to describe it as even a peninsula. A great many years have passed since I visited Oeniadae and the harbour of Petala, and I was not at that time concerned with questions of Homeric geography, so that as regards this particular region I have been dependent on maps and topographical observations, which I have not personally verified. The cumulative evidence of antiquity at any rate suggests the possibility that certain changes may have taken place in the physical geography of this area which would render still more acceptable the identification of Petala, a long island separated by only a few hundred yards of water from the mainland, with Strabo's Dolicha, opposite Oeniadae and the mouth of the Achelous. Homer, we may assume, had no

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personal contact with the mainland and the lesser islands off it, which seen from Ithaca are lost in the outline of the coast. He would, however, have learned in Ithaca of the maritime community whose vessels maintained communications with the outer islands.

Having examined and rejected all the alternatives, I am satisfied that the only adequate solution of the problem is to be found on the lines which have been suggested, and I adhere to the view which Colonel Leake, supporting the opinion of Strabo as in conformity with Homer, has expressed as follows: "There seems no good reason for doubting that Doulichion was the head of the insular state, which, as well as that of the neighbouring islands of the Teleboae and the Taphii, and like some of the islands of Greece in modern times, may have attained by maritime commerce, not unmixed, perhaps, with piracy, a degree

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of populousness and opulence, beyond the proportions of its dimensions and natural resources.”¹

The prosperity of such a maritime federation of islands in Homer's time has a remarkable parallel in the social and economic development of the islands of Hydra, Spezai and Psara little more than a century ago. These islands are of no agricultural value, but the enterprise, thrift and seamanlike qualities of their inhabitants had from small beginnings gradually made them the owners of a commercial navy which acquired a practical monopoly of the carrying trade in eastern waters. They produced a race of splendid sailors with unrivalled knowledge of treacherous seas, and they furnished and manned a fighting fleet in the war of independence strong enough successfully to defy the powerful Turkish empire.

And now by linking up the inferences

¹ Leake, *Northern Greece*, III, p. 51.

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which it has seemed justifiable to draw from Homeric texts and from the evidence supplied by later classical authorities with the conclusions adopted by modern research regarding the advent of the Achaeans, it seems possible to form a reasonable hypothesis which would account for the importance of Doulichion. The immigrants from the Danubian plains in the north descending into Greece in various groups or clans seem first to have established themselves in the neighbourhood of Dodona, whence one branch made its way eastward towards southern Thessaly or rather Phthiotis. Another band of adventurers, summoned perhaps as allies or mercenaries by one party to a local dispute, moved on into Aetolia, whence in the course of time, having increased in numbers, they crossed the Gulf of Corinth and occupying the plains of Elis spread by degrees over a considerable portion of the Peloponnese. The cultivable valleys were the lure which

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attracted them. A third band, it may be assumed, descending southward to the valley of the Achelous, fixed their ambitions on its maritime plain. But the tenure of the irrigated land had to be contested with previous occupants. The dispossessed and other raiders from the mountains would watch for opportunities to pillage the stocks which had been harvested. The coastal lagoons abounded with fish, and the new-comers, being an adaptable and assimilative race, no doubt rapidly acquired the habit of the sea. Once they had done so they would recognise the advantage of establishing settlements with storehouses less open to attack on the coastal islands and of securing for themselves a monopoly of the immediately neighbouring water-ways. It is easy to conceive how a prosperous maritime community might thus arise, powerful enough also to control an extensive area on the well-watered coastlands, maintained under

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cultivation and pasture by subject populations.

In the process of expansion towards the islands further west, Ithaca would be the first and most obvious goal. Being relatively small, sixteen miles in length from north to south and nowhere more than four miles wide, it would have been subdued and occupied with little difficulty. Cephallenia, which is more than six times as big, would have presented a graver problem, and it was perhaps only gradually absorbed by the Achaeans after they had first established themselves at Same or Samos across the Ithaca channel. A central position and priority of occupation would account for the adoption of Ithaca, where the leader who became paramount would feel himself more secure against risings and combinations, as the headquarters of the island state.

The people of this western Achaean kingdom were known in Homeric times as Ceph-

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lenians. It was only later that that name became attached to the largest island of the group. Leaf assumes that there was a population of Cephallenians throughout the islands and on the mainland, ruled over by an Achaeans aristocracy. Is there sufficient evidence to establish such a distinction, and might not the references in the text equally suggest that the Cephallenians were the branch of the Achaeans which occupied the western area? The fighting people led by Laertes in his younger days against the city of Nericos were Cephallenians (Od. XXIV, 378). The slaughtered wooers are referred to by Eupeithes as the noblest of the Cephallenians in the same passage in which he denounces Odysseus for having brought disaster to the Achaeans (Od. XXIV, 426-9). The suitors themselves are indeed more often spoken of as Achaeans, but Odysseus after their extermination expresses the fear that the men of Ithaca may send

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messengers to arouse all the cities of the Cephallenians. At the inspection of the forces described in the *Iliad*, Odysseus stands with the battalions of the Cephallenians, no feeble folk (*Il.* IV, 329–30), and in the catalogue of the ships he is represented as leading the Cephallenians from the four regions of Ithaca, with those of Zakynthos, those who were distributed about in Same, and those who occupied the mainland and the coasts over against it which I have assumed to signify Leucas (*Il.* II, 631–5).

There is a reference in the *Odyssey* to the “deme of the Cephallenians.” It is not clear where this region was. The swineherd Eumaeus has testified to the many herds of cattle, sheep, goats and swine owned by his master on the mainland, where they were tended by his own people and by aliens (*Od.* XIV, 100–3). Philoetius the neatherd tells how when he was still a boy he was sent to take charge of oxen in this deme

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of the Cephallenians (Od. XX, 210). The two passages have been read together, and it has consequently been assumed by Leaf and others that the "deme of the Cephallenians" means the mainland. But Philoetius on his first appearance in the poem is encountered driving a heifer and goats which had been brought to Ithaca by ferrymen, who also carried passengers.¹ The use of the word ferrymen would seem particularly appropriate were the reference to transport across the narrow channel between Ithaca and Cephallenia, across which ferryboats still ply to-day between Same and Pisaeto or Polis. On the other hand, Eumaeus, in enumerating the herds of Odysseus, has not mentioned cattle in Same. His enumeration, however, does not seem

¹ Prof. A. J. Murray, in his translation of line 187, Book XX, of the *Odyssey* (Loeb Classical Library), inserts the words "from the mainland" after "brought over" (by ferrymen). I can find no justification for this addition in the text.

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to have been complete, for he says nothing about sheep in Ithaca, though Odysseus in his youth had been sent by his father to Messene to recover three hundred Ithacan sheep lifted with their shepherds by Messenian raiders (Od. XXI, 18-21). It would be pedantic to expect absolute consistency in regard to such details in so long a poem. Nor should too much importance be attached to the word *ferryman*. In the island dominion there were no doubt regular services of small vessels transporting men and animals across the narrow seas. Noemon used to bring his brood mares from the still more distant Elis. The point is, in any case, not material to the main issue.

CHAPTER V

THE DESCRIPTION OF ITHACA

THE WALLS OF AETOS. POLIS AND REITHRON. THE TAPHIANS

*ἦ τοι μὲν τρηχεῖα καὶ οὐχ ἱππήλατός ἐστιν,
οὐδὲ λίην λυπρή, ἀτὰρ οὐδ' εὐρεῖα τέτυκται,
ἐν μὲν γὰρ οἱ σῖτος ἀθέσφατος, ἐν δὲ τε οἶνος
γίγνεται· αἰεὶ δ' ὄμβρος ἔχει τεφαλυῖά τ' ἐέρση·
αἰγίβοτος δ' ἀγαθὴ καὶ βούβοτος· ἔστι μὲν ὕλη
παντοίη, ἐν δ' ἀρδμοὶ ἐπηετανοὶ παρέασι.*

Od. XIII, 240-7.

The fourth question which remains to be answered, namely whether the modern Itháki offers ample internal evidence that it is the island which Homer described, whether sites and objects mentioned in his Odyssey can still be identified, either precisely or with alternative solutions, demands,



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even more than the points already considered, direct investigation on the spot.

The strictures passed by such formidable controversialists as Hercher and Völcker on the credulity of Sir William Gell, who was one of the first to maintain that Itháki fulfils the topographical indications of the *Odyssey*, may appear rather disconcerting to one who proposes to give an affirmative answer to these questions. He may, however, console himself with reflecting that many other eminent authorities among their countrymen have dissented from their negative criticism. Schliemann in later times was in general agreement with Gell. To my mind the conclusions of neither are altogether acceptable, especially as regards the site of the Homeric capital. Wilamowitz does not exclude some acquaintance with the geography of Ithaca in the "editor" of the *Odyssey*. Bérard is a convinced opponent of the Dörpfeld theory and looks

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for no other Ithaca. Our own two oldest universities have had respectively such distinguished champions as Mr. Allen and Dr. Leaf, who take different sides on this particular issue in the Homeric question.

To expect a geographer's topographical exactitude in a poet's presentation of the scene of a dramatic story dealing with events, which had even in his time already entered the mythic cycle, would be manifestly unreasonable. The number of bays and mountains in Ithaca, moreover, makes more than one plausible identification of some positions possible. But with these reservations I venture to affirm that a lover of Homer with a due appreciation of literary values, when he has familiarized himself with the outstanding features of that beautiful island, many of which correspond to the descriptions in the *Odyssey* with a precision which can hardly be accidental, will have no difficulty in finding

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there a solid basis of reality for the structure of imagination.

Let us accordingly first consider the descriptive passage in the thirteenth book which stands at the head of this chapter. It may be rendered as follows: *The island is rugged and ill-suited for the driving of horses; yet it is not so very poor though it is not wide in extent. In it corn grows in abundance and it produces wine. Rain and the enriching dew fail not ever. It affords good forage for goats and cattle; woodland of all kinds is found there and watering pools which last all through the year* (Od. XIII, 240-7).

There is nothing in these lines which could not justly have been said of Ithaca. It is rugged and mountainous. It has two fertile areas, one in each section of the island, but the northern is much the most extensive and is said to contain the better soil. The "abundant" production of grain must

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be considered in relation to the population, which was probably not very large, seeing that the catalogue only assigns twelve ships to the three islands and the mainland included in the domain of Odysseus. The district of Oxi is reported to furnish wheat of excellent quality, and the level lands might well have supplied more than was sufficient for the needs of the inhabitants. The rainfall in Ithaca is still to-day unusually heavy for Greece. Forage for cattle means only such rough verdure as is available for feeding in Mediterranean countries, collected on the mountain side. The absence of any meadowland is indicated elsewhere (*Od.* IV, 605-8). There is a considerable variety of trees in Ithaca, though the big forests have been destroyed, and with their disappearance the rainfall drains rapidly from the heights so that springs and pools have become more rare.

The map of Ithaca facing p. 98 shows

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how the Gulf of Molo divides the island into two approximately equal halves united on the western side by an isthmus formed by a ridge which is really a prolongation of the mountain system of Anoi. In either section two districts are recognized, Anoi and Oxi¹ in the northern half, Aetos and Vathy in the southern. The lines in the catalogue of the ships (Il. II, 632-3) which group together *those who dwell in Ithaca and Neriton with its restless foliage or inhabit Krokyleia and rugged Aigilips* suggest a similar partition of the island in ancient times into four divisions, of which Ithaca with its deme, corresponding as I hope to show with Oxi, formed one. If Neriton be represented by the mountain area of Anoi, the other two ancient divisions must be looked for in the southern section. Aigilips the sheer, as its name implies,

¹ Anoi = 'Ανωγῆ, *highland*. Oxi or Exoi = 'Εξωγῆ, *outland*.

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might be identified with Aetos, the rugged height above the western end of the gulf of Molo, and the whole mountain system extending to the southern end of the island. Krokyleia could then only be Vathy with the valley and cultivable rising ground behind it. The name does not offer any definite clue. It would be tempting to associate it with the saffron crocus which grows there, but etymologically Krokyleia should be derived from *κροκύς*, and the prevalence in this region of blocks or boulders of white limestone resembling flocks of wool, many of which have been collected to build terrace walls for olive plantations, may suffice to explain it. Such an etymology would account for the existence of the name in other parts of Greece, and Thucydides mentions a Krokyleia in Aetolia. Strabo places Krokyleia and also an Aigilips in Leucas.

Stephanus of Byzantium quotes a more

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ancient author, Heraclion the son of Glaucus, as an authority for the fourfold division of Ithaca. But Heraclion only specifies the names of three districts, namely Neion, Krokyleia and Aigireus, the last of which certainly resembles Aigilips. Of the fourth he only says that it was in the south and on the sea. This is of little assistance to the topographer, as all the other regions also touch the sea. Elsewhere Stephanus, under the heading Demos, refers to the line in the *Odyssey* (I, 103) where Athena is represented as appearing at the gate of Odysseus in the deme of Ithaca and identifies that deme with Krokyleia. But the palace and city of Odysseus lay under Mount Neion, which name, unless he has confused it with Neriton, his authority Heraclion has indicated as that of a different district. The evident confusion here detracts from the value of any information derived from Stephanus, except in so far as he confirms

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the existence in ancient times of a fourfold division such is still recognized to-day. It is safer, therefore, to abide by the enumeration of districts in the catalogue. Such geographical distributions have generally remained unaltered from the earliest times.

The most important point to establish is the situation of the Homeric capital, into due relation with which other places mentioned in the text will have to fit. Such co-ordination will present few difficulties if we adopt the site which has the support of secular tradition, and which, though there is no town or even village there to-day, has always been known as Polis. It is on the slopes above the bay and harbour which bears the same name.

I have already given my reasons for assuming that Mount Neriton, which Homer indicates as the conspicuous feature of Ithaca, can only be the great mountain mass of Anoi. M. Bérard on the other hand would

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have Anoi to be Neion, while at the same time he accepts the traditional site of Polis. Those who do so are, I think, for reasons which will appear later, bound to identify Neion with the double-peaked height of Oxi which immediately overhangs the bay. Anoi is too far away to justify the epithet.

Sir William Gell and, many years afterwards, Schliemann assumed that the very ancient walls on the summit and slope of Mount Aetos belonged to the Homeric capital. No other remains of equal importance or extent are to be found on the island where, however, little systematic excavation has been attempted. Having accordingly determined to carry out some clearing operations there, Schliemann was concerned to prove that the city of Odysseus could not have been at Polis. He affirmed that the so-called *castro* which dominated the bay at the southern extremity of Mount Oxi had not been touched by the hand of

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man. On the other hand Leake, a most careful observer, found there in 1806 portions of a wall of rude masonry supporting a level space, which he had no hesitation in recognizing as an acropolis. Leake's recorded evidence is important, since ancient walls have a habit of disappearing where earthquakes are not infrequent and stones are in constant demand for terracing. Schliemann further argued that the city would not have been built on the fertile ground where arable land is relatively scarce, but should rather be looked for on a rocky altitude unsuitable for cultivation. This contention is not, I think, borne out by such general evidence as may be derived from the *Odyssey* regarding settlements of the Homeric age, nor is it necessary to assume that a town on the slope over the bay, or even the palace of Odysseus, occupied any considerable extent of valuable land.

Let us, however, first examine the ancient

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remains on the height of Aetos, which we scaled on a hot September day, very laboriously for there is no beaten path, and boulders rounded by time and weather alternating with jagged rocks obstruct the sheer ascent from the western side, which a local expert recommended. Descending the eastern slope in the afternoon through the area of the old town, we struck in one or two places what may have been portions of a road roughly levelled on the rock, but the invasion of wild herbage and fallen stone made only brief stretches traceable. We had driven to the foot of Aetos, where there was an isolated farm-house and a well. A boy from thence was engaged to carry our things and Gerasimou tied his horse to an olive tree and accompanied us. The ascent must have taken a good hour. Our only competitors were the independent goats, who find their own way home at milking time. From the western side, where

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the Ithaca channel began to widen to the south and opened the distant mountains of Morea, the effects of light and colour were magnificent. The western coast line of Ithaca was sheer to the blue water and the place seemed strangely remote and solitary.

The position of Aetos which dominates the isthmus was strategically important. The rugged height is separated from the system of Mount Merovugli by a depression and a ridge a mile and a half wide, which slopes steeply down on the eastern side to the head of the Gulf of Molo and on the west to a small bay known as Exaeto or Pisaeto (Opisso-Aeto) opposite the Gulf of Same in Cephallenia. This cove affords the only shelter for vessels south of Polis along the whole of the Ithaca channel, and I was informed that a ferryboat plies between it and Same. Leake found the remains of a wall crossing the ridge. The

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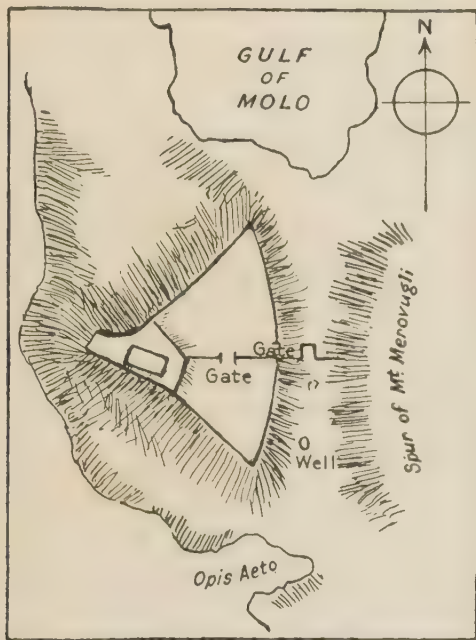
stones have perhaps since been put to other uses, for I could not trace it along the ridge itself, though higher up on the slope it may be followed to where it cuts through the



walls of the ancient town, triangular in form, which occupied the western face of Aetos. From that point it is prolonged upwards to join the circuit of the citadel on the summit. The triangular town, which

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does not appear to have been more than a mile in circumference, was thus cut into equal halves, with communication main-



Aetos. Leake's Plan.

tained between them by a central gateway. Like the curtain of the acropolis this wall is built of large polygonal blocks roughly

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fitted and it belongs to a prehistoric epoch. Within this enclosed area Schliemann claimed to have traced the foundations of 190 houses, and he considered that there was space for 2,000, an estimate which seems to me exaggerated. They were, however, on a small scale, some having only one chamber, others four and even six. The lentisk bushes have now once more encroached and the rains have washed away any superficial débris, so that little trace of Schliemann's work is left to-day. The acropolis on the summit, which appears to have been artificially but rudely levelled, is surrounded by Cyclopean walls of massive rough-hewn blocks, indicating a very early, possibly even pre-Achaean, date. There are two cisterns within an enclosure which appears to have been an inner keep built of blocks, squared and carefully fitted, though now much disintegrated where not actually thrown down by earthquakes. This must have been a

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subsequent construction. Towards the base of the western slope we came upon another well. This important position at the junction of the two sections of the island with access to the sea on either side, remained



in occupation for upwards of a thousand years, as may be ascertained, according to the testimony of Leake, by comparing the approximate date of inscriptions and relics found in tombs on the ridge with the remote antiquity of the walls.

It has been suggested by Leake that

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the town on Aetos may have been the Alalcomenae which is referred to by Stephanus, Plutarch and an author quoted by the latter, Istrus of Alexandria, as being the capital of the island. The name is not, however, mentioned in the Odyssey,¹ and Skylax and Ptolemy, like Homer, speak of the city of Ithaca. Strabo quotes Apollodorus as authority for there having been a little town, *πολίχνιον*, called Alalcomenae in the island of Asteris, "situated on the isthmus." The island of Dhascalio in the Ithaca channel, which must I think, in spite of certain difficulties to be discussed later, be Homer's Asteris, is narrow and less than 200 yards in length. It would seem, therefore, far too small for the site of even a little

¹ In the Iliad (IV, 8) the epithet *Alalcomenean* is attached to Athena, who is so closely associated with Ithaca. The word may, however, there not be derived from a place-name, but may only mean the defender or protector.

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town, nor has it obviously any isthmus. Parenthetically it may also be mentioned that there is no isthmus in Arkudi which Dörpfeld would identify with Asteris. Either Strabo, therefore, must have misunderstood Apollodorus, or a passage in the text has been transposed from elsewhere. Demetrius Chalcocondylas, a fifteenth-century authority on manuscripts, is reported to have said that those of Strabo were full of transpositions. It is therefore not improbable that Strabo had really in mind the isthmus of Ithaca for the site of Alalcomenae.¹

I do not contend that a position of such strategic importance may not even have been the stronghold of an Odysseus who became legendary. I am only concerned to show that it cannot have contained the palace which Homer conceived in the *Odyssey*. The space available on the arti-

¹ There is also an Alalcomenae in Boeotia.

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ficially levelled summit is very restricted. The slopes of Aetos are everywhere steep and on the sea side almost sheer. Homer, if he knew the ancient fortress, could not have conceived the young Achaean lords as playing with the discus or throwing the javelin in front of a palace situated on the peak. All the available room would have been occupied by cisterns and shelters. Had the palace been actually within the town area, the slaying of the suitors could hardly have taken place without the cries of battle attracting attention. It would appear from the poem that the house of Odysseus was at no great distance from the town but not actually in it, since, after the holocaust and the purification of the hall, the household are ordered to engage in music and dancing, which was accompanied by song, in order that passers-by going to and from the city might assume that a wedding-feast was in progress (Od. XXIII, 134 ff.). Odysseus and

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Eumaeus moreover, coming from the swine-herd's farm, did not climb up through a rock-built town but came upon the palace directly from the path or road they had followed after passing a poplar grove and a fountain and altar dedicated to the nymphs (Od. XVII, 204 ff.). Such a grove would hardly be found on the side of Aetos, nor could the great olive tree from whose trunk and roots Odysseus had carved his bridal bed (Od. XXIII, 190 ff.) have grown on the unsheltered summit of that rock. The description of the palace (Od. XVII, 265 ff.), its great hall where the hundred and eight wooers sat at meat, its upper chambers, baths, storerooms and household offices for fifty hand-maidens suggests an extensive ground plan for which there would be no space in the citadel of Aetos. The author of the *Odyssey* would rather seem to have conceived the Achaean princes as living in open spaces. When Telemachus and Pei-

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sistratus arrive at the court of Menelaos they are not said to enter a walled city, but they drive their chariot right up to the palace gate. It is, moreover, legitimate to suppose that the residence of the prince would be established at no great distance from the best and most fertile land, of which he would hold a goodly portion, and this is certainly to be found in the northern district of Oxoi. For such reasons, and several more might be added, I can see little to justify the assumption of Gell and Schliemann beyond the fact that the prehistoric walls on Actos offer the most important evidence at present available of ancient settlement on the island.

On the other hand, the site of Polis, with its sheltered bay below the undulating plateau which occupies the triangle between Oxoi, Anoi and the heights of Marmaka in the north of the island, seems ideally to fulfil all the requirements of the text. The

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city lay, we are told, under Neion. So also did the harbour of Reithron, where Mentès, chieftain of the Taphians, is said to have left his ship, *beside the cultivated land away from the city*. Now Polis lies under the southern extremity of Mount Oxi. Beneath its eastern slope is the bay of Afales, open to the north but sheltered from the east, south and west. Towards this bay the cultivated land leans down. It therefore corresponds perfectly to Homer's anchorage of Reithron. Nowhere else in the island can a site be found where the city, with its port and a second harbour situated some distance away, could so justly both be said to lie under the same mountain.

We are entitled to assume that the account given of himself by the fictitious Mentès to explain his presence in Ithaca would have sufficient verisimilitude to persuade. He was on his way to Temese to trade a freight of iron for copper. There

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was a Temesa or Tempsa on the coast of Bruttium (S. Eufemia in Calabria) where there were copper mines. There was also a Temese or Tamassos in Cyprus. Ancient authorities, Strabo, Pliny and Stephanus,¹ identified the islands of the Taphians or Teleboans with those which lie between Leucas and the Acarnanian coast. These are now Meganisi, Kalamos and Kastos, and the first, which is the largest and most fertile, was known to Strabo as Taphious or Taphiussa. He maintains that this group was distinct from the Echinae and belonged to other masters. As the bay of Afales does not lie out of the course of a vessel proceeding from Meganisi towards Italy, and as Reithron seems to have been a cove in that bay, perhaps as the name suggests at a point where the water from Neion drained into the sea, another segment of the puzzle

¹ Strabo, X, p. 459. Pliny, *N.H.*, IV, 12, s. 19. Stephanus, *Taphos*.

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would fit into its place if we could regard the Taphian islands of the old geographers as the home of Mentès. But, apart from the improbability that Homer would have been acquainted with copper mines on the Calabrian coast, other and more complicated issues arise in the context of the story.

Who were these Taphians or Teleboans? In the *Amphitryonic* legends they are described as islanders. From various references in the *Odyssey* they appear to have been, like the Phœnicians, merchants who were also slave-traders on a small scale and addicted to the honourable vocation of piracy. They were evidently a people distinct from the Achæans, because although Mentès was familiar with the destinies of the Argive dynasts after their return (*Od.* I, 284 ff.), he speaks of the expedition to Troy in terms which make it clear that his clansmen had no part in it (*Od.* I, 209 ff.). The ship of Mentès was laden with iron.

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From where did that iron come? It was not found in the islands assigned to the Taphians by Strabo. But their trading vessels ranged over a wide area extending as far east as Sidon (Od. XV, 425 ff.). There were iron mines in Euboea and several of the Aegean islands, notably Skyros, Skopelos and Andros. A ship coasting round the Peloponnese and making northward for the narrowest passage to Italy would skirt Ithaca and might well touch at Reithron, having in the meantime called at Meganisi. But if Mentès were the ruler or headman of an island only ten miles away, it seems strange that the poet should represent so near a neighbour as unrecognized, not only by Telemachus but also by any of the aspirants to the hand of Penelope (Od. I, 405 ff.), the more so indeed as the father of Antinous is said to have at some former time been associated with the Taphians in a raid on Thesprotia (Od. XVI, 426-7). It is true

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that Mentès admits that he had quite lost touch with Ithaca since the Argives went to Troy.

The identification of Taphos with Meganisi, moreover, involves the inclusion of an autonomous enclave in the midst of the dominion of Odysseus. Homer was familiar, however, with small city states occupying restricted areas. For the poet's purpose the Taphian independence may have seemed sufficiently explained by a guest friendship, equivalent to a primitive treaty of amity, existing between the families of Mentès and Odysseus, and dating back to ancestral times, to which we are told the venerable Laertes could have testified (*Od.* I, 187-9). We learn indeed that when Odysseus had gone to Ephyre in search of a deadly poison in which to dip his arrows and was refused it by a god-fearing Ilus, son of Mermerus, he obtained it from the father of Mentès whom he visited on

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the return journey, for Anchialus loved him very dearly (Od. I, 260-4). Unfortunately the position of this Ephyre or Ephyra cannot be fixed with certainty. Strabo assigns that name to the ancient capital of Thesprotia. But he also mentions another Ephyre near Sikyon, not far from Corinth. This would seem to be the place mentioned in the Iliad (XV, 530). A Thesprotian Ephyre would better suit the story in the Odyssey.

Leaf, who emphatically rejects Meganisi as well as Kalamos, which Dörpfeld suggests for the island of Mentès, thinks it probable that the iron was derived from the north of the Adriatic, from Carniola, and was being carried to Temese from some emporium controlled by the Taphians. He has advanced a bold and attractive theory that this may have been in Corfu, which is some sixty miles north of Ithaca. He conceives the friendship between the Taphian and

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Cephallegenian chieftains to have been based on some understanding by which the trade of the north and the west was reserved to the former, who undertook in return not to harry the coasts or attack the vessels of the other party. The reputation of the Taphians for piracy might, it is suggested, have been due to their determination to reserve to themselves a monopoly of the carrying trade to the south and the east from the northern Adriatic and from Italy in the west, with which the Greeks had no direct contact, though the names of Sicania and the Sikels were known to them. If Corfu were the home of the Taphians, then Mentès with his cargo of iron must, in order to justify his landing in Ithaca, have been making for the Temese in Cyprus, a distant market, but not so far off as Sidon, whence the nurse of Eumæus had been kidnapped by these sea-rovers. Leaf would account for Taphious having been the ancient

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name of Meganisi by assuming that the Taphians were expelled from Corfu by that same thrust of new migration from the north which drove the Achaeans out of Dörpfeld's Ithaca-Leucas to the modern Itháki. The old place-name was also carried with them by the fugitives not only to Meganisi but also the western coast of Cephallenia, where there is a monastery called Taphios under a Taphian mountain, and to Mount Taphiassos in Aetolia at the mouth of the Corinthian gulf. Such a hypothesis of course involves the abandonment of the traditional identification of Corfu with the island of Alcinous, which it is perhaps difficult in any case to justify.

The objection to Leaf's interesting suggestion seems to me to be that such a treaty reservation of the northern and western trade is too elaborate a conception for Homeric times. It is more natural to suppose that the poet had in mind a small but

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very active trading community in the vicinity of the island of Odysseus, with which the Achaeans had a friendly understanding to live and let live as they had also with the neighbouring Thesprotians. Individual Cephallenians appear indeed to have co-operated in Taphian raids. For my present purpose it is sufficient to establish that neither the ancient nor the most modern identification of the land of the Taphians is inconsistent with the verisimilitude of a visit from Mentès to the haven now known as Afales, under the mountain of Oxi.

CHAPTER VI

THE DESCRIPTION OF ITHACA

(continued)

THE HOMERIC CAPITAL. ASTERIS. KORAX
AND ARETHUSA. THE NAIADS' CAVE

There is ample evidence of ancient occupation on the high ground above the bay of Polis. More thorough research than has yet been devoted to the site and some judicious excavation might yield much more. Graves have been found in more than one place in the neighbourhood and particularly south of the beach at the head of the port. It was the custom of the islanders to bury by the sea which was their highway, as the Romans did along their roads. The uplands continued to be inhabited in Roman times and sepulchral inscriptions of the imperial epoch

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have been found near Port Phrikes. The early masonry discovered by Leake on the acropolis has already been mentioned. He also identified in many of the scattered buildings above the port, and especially in a ruined chapel dedicated to S. Elias, stone blocks of ancient working. This constant re-employment of old materials for new construction and for terracing accounts for the comparative rarity of ancient buildings. Some foundations, however, of Hellenic walls exist among the vineyards, and these appear to have crossed a ridge above the head of the harbour at a spot now known as Stavros, where a church has recently been built to serve the scattered farms in the neighbourhood. The most important remains now visible above ground are on the slope of Oxoi, south of a spur on which stands a village of some sixty houses bearing the same name as the mountain.

We were shown a vertical rock some fifteen

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feet high framed in lentisk bushes, at the foot of which was a water-pool locally known as Melanydro. In the winter the water is said to fall over the ridge, and when the mountain of Oxi was wooded there must have been a more constant flow. Such a rock from which the water flowed down into a fountain, encircled by a poplar grove, to which the townsfolk come to draw their water, is mentioned in the *Odyssey* (XVII, 205 ff.). But rock and spring are too far from the probable town site to justify a not unnatural desire to see here the spot where stood the altar of the nymphs by which Melanthius met Odysseus and Eumaeus. The local patriotism of the inhabitants of Oxi would have you believe that here was the cliff of Korax and the fountain of Arethusa. But these we shall see are undoubtedly, as the text of the *Odyssey* indicates, in the south of the island, nor could the farm of Eumaeus have been so near the town. There was, however, it will

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be remembered, in the neighbourhood of the palace a spring of dark water where the hand-maids used to fill their pitchers ἐπὶ κρήνην μελάνυδρον (Od. XX, 158). Leake was informed that part of the village of Oxoi was once built just above the rock. A hundred yards or so further on we came upon a very interesting construction, standing on a bluff of rock. It appears to have been a small temple, which has been converted into a chapel dedicated to S. Athanasius. The lower part of the walls which are some eighteen inches thick are of small polygonal masonry; the upper part has been restored or completed in rubble to form the chapel. The internal dimensions as measured by Leake are 21 feet by $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet. It stands on a larger base built of massive blocks. On the eastern side of it are the foundations of a smaller building nearly square. There is also a well head opening into a dry cistern or a subterranean chamber. A little lower down

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on level ground some excrescences of rock have been hewn into what appear to be gateposts, perhaps marking the entrance to the temenos. In the cliff on which the temple stands are some niches, and the remains of an ancient terracing wall can be followed northwards. A stairway with some nine steps has been cut in the limestone. In the vineyard below, graves are said to have been found. Not far away as we were returning I noticed a hole in the ground with some rough steps, descending which I found a well or spring roofed over with a rough dome of stones. This appears to have escaped the notice of Leake; it is no doubt of ancient construction. There may well be other remains in this area beyond those which our guide was able to show us. But what we saw was amply sufficient to prove that the high land above the bay of Polis was the scene of active life in remote antiquity.

The "city of Ithaca" was, I conjecture, on

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terraced levels of the slope above the harbour south of the acropolis, a position sheltered from the north wind. The palace of Odysseus was conceived by Homer as standing higher up on the flank of Neion. This is suggested by various references in the poem and especially by the passage in which Eumaeus speaks of his return to the farm after he has been away all day on an expedition to the palace to inform Penelope of the return of Telemachus. He did not go into the city but went on his way above it, that is to say round the edge of the ridge above the bay, and from the hill of Hermes he saw a ship coming in, which he took to be that of the suitors (Od. XVI, 465-75). Any little elevation on the ridge overlooking the port below would do for the hill of Hermes, whose shrines we know from the anthology were set in conspicuous places for mariners to see. Again when Odysseus and his men set out to find Laertes they went *down* to the farm and

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orchard which no doubt lay in the fertile area below Neion.

If Polis was the ancient city of Ithaca, it follows that the little island of Dhascalio, which lies opposite to it, some two miles away off the Cephallenian coast, must be Asteris. This identification is rejected by those who exact precise fulfilment of the descriptions in the text. Asteris is only there mentioned once. *There is a rocky island in the midst of the sea, between Ithaca and rugged Samos, Asteris, a little island. And in it is a harbour with double access, affording safe lying for vessels. There the Achaeans remained in wait for him* (Od. IV, 844–7). This must be read in connection with the previous passage where Antinous asks that he may be furnished with a ship and twenty men to watch in concealment for Telemachus as he passes *in the strait between Ithaca and rugged Samos* (Od. IV, 671). A glance at the general map will make it clear that this strait can only be what is now known

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as the Ithaca Channel, the narrow strip of water separating that island from the northern horn of Cephallenia, up which Telemachus would come on his way to Polis. There is no other island in the channel but Dhascalio, which it must frankly be admitted has no real "harbour of double access," though there is a small beach on the eastern side for landing in fair weather. Asteris was a rocky island, which, inasmuch as all the islands in this archipelago are rocky, no doubt means simply a rock. It was also small. Dhascalio is about a cable long and it only rises some ten feet above the water. In relation to Ithaca and Samos, Asteris was said to be *μεσσηγὺς*, a word which might strictly be interpreted half-way across, but need mean no more than *between*. Dhascalio is in fact only about four cables distant from the Cephallenian shore. Seen from the ridge of Polis it might almost be taken for a reef enclosing an anchorage with an entrance at either end. The double

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haven may, however, merely have been invented by poetic licence. The author of the *Odyssey* would not have explored the rock itself to verify such a detail, and the fact that there was an island in the channel was all that he needed to know for his purpose. It is, however, quite possible that some modification may have taken place in the physical formation of *Dhascalio*. There is shallow water to the N.N.W. and S.S.E. of the island and subsidences are not uncommon in an area so subject to earthquakes. Natives of *Ithaca* speak of a partial submergence at *Polis*. The so-called island of *Odysseus* in *Corfu* is said to have been once accessible by a causeway. The greater part of the area of ancient *Baia* lies under water to-day, and rock cuttings and stairways may be detected through the clear water on a calm day all along the *Posillipo* peninsula near *Naples*. Plausibility is lent to such an assumption by indications of former habitation on *Dhascalio*, a tower,

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a chapel, some ruins and a cistern. From the ridge of Polis it would not be possible to ensure sighting a vessel coasting along Ithaca from the south in time to intercept it before it came under direct observation, as it would be screened by the curve of the shore and the outward thrust of Aetos. The story-teller would therefore naturally take advantage of the existence of an island well out in the strait where the intending assassins might lie hidden. Dhascalio and the high coast behind would command the whole of the channel. The wind-swept heights on which look-out men were posted (Od. XVI, 365-6) would be on the Cephallenian shore, where in Finlay's time guards used to watch for contraband, and for what the coincidence is worth there are two little creeks where a boat could be beached. At night the suitors cruised in the channel.

The identification of sites which I have endeavoured so far to establish have all been in the northern section of the island. The

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house of Eumaeus the swineherd and the oak woods where his droves grew fat on the fallen acorns near the rock of Korax and the fountain of Arethusa, were evidently placed by the poet in the southern area. The farm of Eumaeus was on the high land with a wide outlook (Od. XIV, 5-7) ; it was in relation to the city where the suitors were assembled at the far end of the island ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιήν (Od. XXIV, 150) and at no great distance from the landing-place at which the ship of Telemachus, returning past the coast of Elis from Pylos in the south, first touched the island shore. The vessel made the land at dawn and the upland farm cannot have been far away, as when Telemachus arrived there the swine had only just been despatched to their pastures.

We started on a beautiful September morning, riding some donkeys which our guide had procured for us, to look for the fountain of Arethusa and the cliff over which

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Odysseus bade Eumaeus to have him thrown if his prophecy of his own return on the self-same day were not fulfilled. Our road, at first a tolerably good one, mounted the ascending slope of the cultivated valley behind Vathy. It led through vineyards and olive groves on wall-sheltered terraces, skirting the side of Mount Merovugli. The few houses or farms in the vicinity of the town have great cisterns for the collection and storage of rain water, for in this region there seem to be no springs. The road became only a rough track and the olives grew sparse as we mounted higher. The mountains ran south in a continuous chain. Towards the crests there was some valonea oak, in places even patches of wood. After about an hour and a half of constant ascent, during which we crossed the dry bed of a winter torrent, we found ourselves on a rough plateau between the mountains and a rock-strewn slope descending somewhat steeply towards the

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sea. There were still a few olive trees here and there in pockets of the limestone, but not a human habitation in sight. Here the donkeys had to be left to pick up any herbage they could find among the rocks, while we went on southward and downhill on foot, following a rough goat-track to where Gerasimou promised we should find the cliff and the fountain. From the plateau there was a magnificent view of the whole Acarnanian coast up to Leucas, outlined in pearl and amethyst across a turquoise-coloured sea. The long chain of islands which screen it was not distinguishable from the mainland. Only the small double-peaked Atokos was near enough to be clearly defined in the middle distance. The ground we traversed was very rough over rock sometimes stratified, sometimes fretted with points like a harrow, sometimes rounded and interlocked like fossil bones of a primeval monster. After crossing a series of rock-shoulders we began to descend

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sharply and at last entered a narrow gorge with sheer almost perpendicular sides. As we turned into it I could hear ravens croaking. At the head of the gorge was a wall of stratified rock which looked almost as if it had been built with irregular horizontal slabs, and at its foot caverned water-holes shadowed with maiden-hair. Above this wall rose a steep boulder-strewn slope tufted with mountain shrubs, and again above the slope was a very lofty vertical cliff showing white against the sky. Over the top of it ravens were flying, two dark blots in the blue.

How could I doubt that this white cliff scored with ochre veins, which still bears the name of the birds which haunt it, and the perennial spring below were Homer's rock of Korax and Homer's fountain of Arethusa, where the swine of Eumaeus came down to drink the dark waters when they had eaten their fill of acorns in the woods on the crest? A wooden trough for the mountain goats to

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drink from showed that it was still visited. A few feet below the spring was a semi-circular platform buttressed with stone supports, beneath which the rocky gorge dropped steeply down towards the little bay of Liá, shut in by an island green with lentisk bushes which is known as Peripigadhi, from its neighbourhood to the fountain. As I sat and sketched the cliff, the conscious *anima loci* of this solitary gorge possessed me. Now and then a stone would detach itself from the disintegrating rock and fall with a hammer-stroke into the dry water-course. Otherwise, save for the ravens' cry renewed from time to time, "the place was silent and aware," strangely remote from the world of time and change.

Our guide, who pursues hares and partridges in the uplands and knows every corner of the island, told me that in winter a considerable fall of water streams over the cliff and descends the gorge to the sea. On its

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crest small trees were visible suggesting woodland on the plateau where the poet had placed the huts and pens of Eumaeus in a place with a wide outlook. But the hour was too late in a land of brief twilight to attempt the ascent. From thence to the ancient city, whither the hogs were driven for the banquets of the suitors, there would be a walk of some eight miles and perhaps more, no great matter for a hardy Greek mountaineer even in this less heroic age. Nothing that we had yet discovered in Ithaca went so far to persuade me as this beautiful spot, that Homer must have seen it with his own eyes. The cliffs and the fountain at the far end of the island correspond so perfectly with the scene evoked by one of the most realistic passages in the great epic.

Telemachus coming home from Pylos on the western coast of the Peloponnese would, if his vessel had taken the most direct line northward, have first reached the little haven

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of S. Andrea, the most southerly point of access. But the account of his journey in the *Odyssey* suggests that he did not follow a straight course. Athena had warned him in the house of Menelaus that the suitors were lying in wait for him in the strait between Ithaca and Samos. A vessel bound for Polis would after leaving Elis behind make for the south-eastern end of Cephallenia, and follow the coast north by west until the Ithaca channel was reached, and it was precisely there that danger lay. He was consequently warned to keep his ship well away from the islands ¹ (*Od.* XV, 33). Therefore when he drew clear of Elis he

¹ That is, of course, until the moment came to land in Ithaca. The meaning of the passage seems to me so clear that it is unnecessary to insist on this point. But Dr. Leaf has demurred, writing that as Telemachus was going to an island in a dense archipelago he does not understand how under such circumstances it could be possible to "keep his ship far from the islands." The map should make the soundness of the advice clear. Leaf, *Homer and History*, p. 351.

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steered north by east towards the islands called Swift or Sharp. Line 299 of Book XV is no doubt difficult to interpret. Ἐπιπροέηκε should mean *sent towards*, with a transitive sense. If the text is not corrupt an object to the verb, namely the ship, must be understood. The word *θόος* applied to islands is difficult to explain. The ordinary meaning is swift, but the verb *θοόω* seems in Book IX, line 327 clearly to be used for *sharpening* or *bringing to a point*. Strabo was content to accept the interpretation of *sharp*. Now off the Aetolian coast a little south of the mouth of the Achelous we find to-day an island called Oxya, a name which has exactly the same meaning. By heading towards Oxya after passing Elis, Telemachus would keep clear of the danger field and then turning north-west in due time he would most naturally enter the bay of Liá, below the fountain and the cliff. I am therefore satisfied to accept the traditional translation of line 299

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and to interpret it : *Thence again he directed the ship towards the pointed islands.*¹ Leaf has contended that for a vessel running to Ithaca such an out-of-the-way course would be wholly needless if the suitors had posted themselves at Dhascalio, where observation of a ship coming from the south would be out of the question. This seems to me to be an unconsciously unfair criticism. Telemachus did not know that they had gone to Asteris. He was only told that they were lying in wait for him in the Ithaca channel and that therefore he was to bear away from the islands, an obvious reason for taking a circuitous course and landing at Port Liá or S. Andrea. Bérard would identify *the pointed islands* with the Montague rocks. I fail, however, to see any argument in favour of his claim, especially as there is an island still known as the *sharp* which far more appropriately suits the requirements of the text.

¹ The plural would be explained if the adjoining Kurtzolari was then an island (see p. 88).

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One other position only now remains to be investigated, that of the harbour of Phorcys where the Phaeacians landed the wanderer at his journey's end, with the neighbouring cave of the Naiads in which his accumulated treasures were concealed. Its situation would to some extent be governed by the direction from which the poet conceived Odysseus to have been conveyed. A venerable tradition which would only be abandoned with reluctance, has identified Scheria with Corfu, the most richly endowed of the western islands. The story twice told by Odysseus himself, when speaking in an assumed personality of his proximate arrival from the Thesprotian land whither he had gone to consult the Dodonian oracle, rather suggests an intention of the poet to bring him from the north. We may on the other hand conceive the happy island to be the pure invention of the fairy tale. Or again we may regard it as associated in the poet's mind with some tradition of

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the old Minoan kingdom, remembering that Alcinous, when he vaunted the prowess of his seamen, spoke of them as having carried Rhadamanthys the brother of Minos to Euboea, the most distant of lands.

But there are other eliminating arguments available for determining the position of the harbour of Phorcys. The exigencies of the story obviously require that Odysseus should be taken to some point in the island where he could be landed unperceived. This excludes Port Polis, as well as the northern havens of Afales, Phrikes and Kioní, from any of which the city could only be reached by traversing the fertile lands, where the presence of a newcomer would at once have excited attention. He was, moreover, according to the tale, carried ashore while still sleeping at a spot where there was a clear view of the mountain of Neriton (Od. XIII, 351). This excludes S. Andrea and Liá in the south of the island and also Pisaeto in the west, from all of which

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the outline of Neriton would be screened by intervening heights. The issue is thus narrowed down to the three bays on the southern side of the Gulf of Molo, Skinós on the east, Vathy in the centre and the little bay of Dhexia immediately to the west of it, each of which has found favour with different topographers. The mountain faces all three of them. A little bay known as the haven of the old man of the sea would, moreover, it may fairly be argued, not be one generally used for traffic and frequented by vessels. It is hardly conceivable that Vathy, with its secure land-locked basin and a considerable area of fertile land behind it, should not have been inhabited from the first, and such ground would not be described as rough and ungrateful, *τρηχεῖαν ἀταρπὸν χῶρον* (Od. XIV, 1).

Port Skinós, the first available landing-place after the Gulf of Molo is entered, would in all respects but one fit the requirements of the text. It is protected by headlands, and

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at the head of the bay in the centre a tongue of rock divides it into two halves, both of which have a shelving shore on which a vessel might be beached without a shock. Olive trees grow almost to the water's edge. But no cave is to be found in the immediate neighbourhood. There may well be caverns in the surrounding limestone rocks, the entrance to which has been hidden by landslides or displacements through earthquake. From Port Skinos to the fountain of Arethusa an active man may make his way over shoulders of hill in two or three hours.

The description of the progress of Odysseus over rough ground up to the woodlands and over the heights to the farm of Eumaeus, would perhaps even more appropriately indicate the little bay of Dhexia, west of the narrow passage to Vathy, as the harbour of Phorceys. Just off the entrance there is a low-lying island which is not mentioned in the text. Some three-quarters of a mile up

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the rocky slope behind there is a grotto or cavern which, with due allowance for poetical idealization, corresponds in almost every detail with the Cave of the Naiads. It has the two entrances, one towards the north wind, through which mortals pass in, and one towards the south wind, which is the way of immortals, at the far end in the vaulted roof. Stalagmite columns represent the high looms of stone at which the nymphs wove their purple tissues, and the mixing bowls are the hollows in the limestone shelves on which the drip of water falls. The entrance is narrow and low, barely four feet high, so that it would have been easy for the goddess to close it with a great stone. Before the ground was cleared for olive plantations it must have been difficult to find. A rough stairway hewn in the rock leads down to a floor with irregular stone-strewn levels, where I found a great squared block, in the top of which a shallow trough had been chipped out. It had evidently served as an

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altar. The cave stands at a considerable altitude over the bay and would not be easy of access in a direct line from the shore. It is said in the *Odyssey* to have been sacred to the Naiads, which is in itself an indication that it was in the hills, for the Naiads were nymphs of mountain and stream. A grotto near the shore would have been dedicated rather to the Nereids or to Amphitryte. It would obviously have taken several journeys to and fro, consuming much time to carry to this spot all the treasures brought from Phaeacia. For the development of his story the poet needed a cavern near enough to the sea for Odysseus to have stored all his valuables there in the early morning hours. Such a cave as he has accurately described existed not far away and he only did what any other poet would have done under the circumstances, he brought it a little nearer where his narrative required it to be. From a literary point of view he would have been equally

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justified in transferring it to the Bay of Skinos. Either the one or the other may be adopted as the harbour of Phorcys.

Leake was informed that a cavern once existed near the harbour of Phrikes in the north of the island, but it had been destroyed by an earthquake. M. Petalas, the mayor of Ithaca, told me of another, which he preferred to regard as the grotto of the poem, near the shore a little north of the Bay of Polis. Such a position would not, however, correspond with the general distribution of sites which adjust themselves to the story with a precision which seems too close to be purely fortuitous.

I have now dealt with all the points which need to be met by a defender of the old tradition, and the task, which has been a labour of love, is completed. It would be unreasonable, I repeat, to look for absolute correspondence with actual conditions in the description of sites and scenes employed as the setting of a romantic rendering of events

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supposed to have taken place centuries even before the composition of the poem, which, moreover, was probably completed when the poet's sojourn in Ithaca was only a memory. But it must, I think, be admitted that strong cumulative evidence can be adduced to establish the familiarity of the author of the *Odyssey* with the island which tradition has always regarded as the home of his hero. It has also, I think, been shown that there is not much fault to find with Homer's geography. To expect the exactitude of a cartographer or a master mariner in a poet of the early world would be worse than pedantic ; it would be absurd. To believe that places which suggest the creation of the poet's dream can still to-day be identified and that their form and colour was reproduced from the reality of experience need not be condemned as incurable romanticism. If it be, I am ready, after my own sojourn in the enchanted island, to submit to impeachment in all the pride of unrepentance.

Since the foregoing chapters were completed I have once more sailed through the home waters of the Odyssey. I have followed what I believe to have been the course of Telemachus, have explored Same, and have beaten up the Ithaca Channel. Further observation has only confirmed the conclusions adopted on my first visit.

R. R.

July, 1927.

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